







# THEOSOPHY



# THEOSOPHY

BY

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J., M.A.



LONDON  
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY  
69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.

1913

22162





TO  
C. V. AND C. V.

C. C. M.

WOODFORD.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	9
I. THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN THEOSOPHY :	
(i.) MME. BLAVATSKY . . . . .	13
(ii.) MRS. BESANT . . . . .	22
(iii.) THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY . . . . .	32
II. THE DOCTRINES OF THEOSOPHY :	
(i.) NAME AND HISTORY . . . . .	40
(ii.) THE MAHÂTMAS . . . . .	49
(iii.) GOD . . . . .	56
(iv.) THE UNIVERSE . . . . .	61
(a) ITS ORIGIN . . . . .	61
(b) ITS STRUCTURE . . . . .	69
(v.) MAN . . . . .	76
(vi.) KARMA . . . . .	86
(vii.) ETHIC . . . . .	93
III. THEOSOPHY AND THE RELIGIONS :	
(i.) BUDDHISM AND SPIRITUALISM . . . . .	101
(ii.) THEOSOPHIST MIRACLES . . . . .	104
(iii.) CHRISTIANITY . . . . .	111
IV. CONCLUSION . . . . .	127
V. APPENDIX . . . . .	133



## INTRODUCTION

IT has been interesting to observe that of the Lectures published by the Catholic Truth Society upon the History of Religions, that dealing with the modern movement known as Theosophy has not only proved to be one of the most popular, but was, indeed, frequently asked for before it was actually published, and that not by Catholics alone. This much extended version of that Lecture (which was in part based upon the works of, and edited by, M. Léonce de Grandmaison) has been written in response to very general request.

Theosophy challenges our attention owing to its wide and, at first, extremely rapid diffusion, and also because of the numerous adepts it ceaselessly draws from the older and established forms of religion. Moreover, it is possible to observe in it the permanence, in our own day, not only of the most general and deep-seated, but of the most bizarre and (it might have

been natural to suppose) restricted religious tendencies — such, especially, as manifested themselves when dying paganism made its supreme effort to kill, and itself to draw life from, nascent Christianity.

The founders, moreover, of modern Theosophy have without exception connected their aims and efforts with ancient and mysterious forms of religious thought. Egypt, and especially India, are said by them to be responsible not alone for a considerable part of their recommended ritual, and for much of their terminology, but for the intellectual vehicle best suited to the propagation of the ultimate truths they live by. With this, however, it is their ambition to link not alone the more remarkable phenomena associated by us with the Middle Age and with post-Renaissance occultism, but also the most modern concepts of philosophy or the postulates of science—the results, in their religious aspect, of Darwinian evolution, Hegelian idealistic monism, of pragmatism, and of much more.

In this way, the germs of truth scattered in all systems, and especially garnered in particular methods or enterprises, are collected by them into a singularly comprehensive whole,



destined to assist humanity towards the ineffable, inconceivable, but supremely real reality.

The following pages aim at describing, first the history, then the doctrines of modern Theosophy, noting in the measure allowed by our space, its historical or philosophical connections with kindred systems. We shall, according to the expressed desire of many readers of the shorter paper, indicate, *without seeking to justify*, the Catholic attitude in regard to certain statements or positions made and adopted by those who have constituted themselves the opponents of Catholic doctrine. But the scope of this short book is not primarily, or, indeed, at all, controversial, but expository. Appreciation of the facts alleged will be left to the judgement of our readers, based on that further study for which we hope to offer them the means. It has been our sincere endeavour to speak with serious courtesy, and without misrepresentation, of much which cannot win our assent or even sympathy.

C. C. M.

*June 1913.*



# THEOSOPHY

## I

### THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN THEOSOPHY

THOUGH both the word Theosophy, and, in a sense, the thing, are (as modern Theosophists are the first to assert, and as we shall see below) far older than the movement which officially began on 17th November 1875, what is popularly known among us as Theosophy can never be dissociated from the names of Mme. Blavatsky, of Mrs. Annie Besant, and, in a secondary measure, from that of Col. Henry Streete Olcott.

#### (i.) MADAME BLAVATSKY

Helen Petrovna Hahn<sup>1</sup> (1831-1891) was born in South Russia of a noble Mecklenburg

<sup>1</sup> The outline of her life, and many details of varying evidential value, may be found in Mrs. Besant's *H. P. B. and the Masters*, London, 1907, which deals, however, preponderantly with the question of the existence of

family which had settled there, and was connected through her mother with the Princes Dolgorouki. She lived in an atmosphere of legend and popular fancy, and was surrounded, being born in the night from the 30th to the 31st of July (the seventh month of the year), with an elaborate and mystic ritual. She was, owing to the date of her birth, not only exempt from the power of the household goblin Domo-voy, but was enabled to bring preternatural powers to bear upon those less privileged who offended her, and often did so to their disaster. She was a somnambulist and very psychic. She was supposed to be possessed, and was "drenched in enough holy water to have floated a ship"<sup>1</sup> (p. 25), and was exorcised. However, she still spent hours and days whispering in dark corners "marvellous tales of travel" and the like, to companions visible only to herself. The "enormous library" of the vast weird country house where she lived failed to satisfy

Mahâtmas and with the discussion as to Mme. Blavatsky's fraud, or honesty, in the matter of "phenomena," especially in India; and in A. P. Sinnett's *Incidents in the Life of H. P. B.*, London, 1886. Her association with Col. Olcott in America is described by him in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Series I., Theosophical Publishing Society, London, 1895.

<sup>1</sup> We quote from her sister, Mme. Vera de Jelihovsky, whose evidence is given in A. P. Sinnett's *Incidents*.

her omnivorous curiosity (p. 33); and she was passionately interested in the extraordinary museum of natural history there preserved (p. 35). She haunted the "catacombs" of its cellars, and its midnight park (p. 36). Miracles of all sorts attended her childhood; she was clairvoyant and clairaudient (p. 46).

Her governess rashly defied this erratic and unmanageable maiden to find a man who would accept her as bride; "even," she said, "old General Blavatsky would decline you" (p. 54). Piqued in her pride and passion, Helen proved the opposite, and married him in 1848. He was the late Vice-Governor of the Province of Erivan in the Caucasus. Immediately upon discovering the meaning of marriage, she fled to Egypt, and initiated a series of journeys of which the dates are somewhat disputed. In the August of 1851 her diary says she was in London, and there, during a moonlight ramble by the Serpentine, "I met the Master of my dreams." She proceeds to South America, then to India by way of the Pacific. After visiting England *viâ* China, Japan, and America about 1853, she returns to America, and is back in England again in 1855 or 1856. Again she seeks India, passing through Egypt, and

makes a third unsuccessful effort to enter Tibet. She reappears in Russia in 1858-59; is in Tiflis from 1861-63; and reaches Tibet at last, through Egypt and Persia, in 1864. There she witnesses astounding "phenomena."

On 11th November 1870, her aunt Mme. Nadejka Fadéef receives "phenomenally" a letter from Tibet, by the hand of "a messenger with an Asiatic face who vanished before my eyes," reassuring her as to her niece's safety (*H. P. B. and the Masters*, pp. 8, 9).

In 1871 she is in Egypt, and founds a *Société Spirite* which ends in fraud and disaster. She makes about this time the acquaintance of the Coulombs, who succour her, but afterwards, for reasons variously given, will be found fighting against her. She returned to America, and in 1874 met Col. Olcott, who had been an officer in the Northern Army. At this time, however, he was an ex-medium and a journalist, and was, in fact, examining the spiritistic phenomena connected with the brothers Eddy. He came entirely under her influence, and was extremely pleased with his connection with her, though she seems to have had a poor enough opinion of him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Psychologized baby," she calls him; cf. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, ix., London, 1885, p. 331.



He was made, however, first President of the Theosophical Society (the "T.S."), founded in New York, 17th November 1875,<sup>1</sup> and certainly displayed extraordinary talents for organization and for popular propaganda. The infant Society, however, was soon all but wrecked; for though it existed professedly to combat spiritualism equally with materialism, and to propagate belief in the existence of certain Eastern sages and their lore, it made use of not a few of the methods of spiritualism, and Mme. Blavatsky was constantly accompanied by a perfect fusillade of rappings, and by other phenomena. She insisted, however, that she was no *medium*, but a *mediator* (i.e. between the sages and ordinary men). Soon after this H. S. O. and H. P. B. (as it is the curious but convenient custom of Theosophists to designate their founders) went to Bombay, where they met once more the Coulombs, and where the conversion of Mr. A. P. Sinnett took place.

<sup>1</sup> Col. Olcott describes its beginning and history from 1875 to 1878 in *Old Diary Leaves*, and in three more series bearing the same title, to 1883, 1887, and 1892 respectively. All these are published by the Theosophical Publishing Society, 161 New Bond Street, London, which we shall call by its chosen abbreviation, "T.P.S."

The stormy incidents of 1884-85, owing to the detection, as it was generally held, of H. P. B. in the wholesale "faking" of phenomena, were, as was quite frankly admitted, a "tremendous blow."<sup>1</sup> We shall recur to this later (p. 106 *sqq.*).

H. P. B. retired into temporary privacy in Europe, and actually refused to return to India if she were not allowed to prosecute the "dastard insinuation" of Mr. Hodgson, the representative in India of the Society for Psychical Research, that she was a Russian spy. This, however, her advisers forbade her to do.

She wrote, none the less, from Switzerland, approving of the assertion that "the T.S., minus Masters, is an absurdity"; and that "I am the only means of communication with the Masters, and for giving out their philosophy—the Society, unless I continue to work for it as in the past, is a dead thing."

She did, in fact, remain "the heart and soul of the Society" till her death, which took place in London on 8th May 1891. This date, known to her followers as White Lotus Day, is observed by social and artistic celebrations.

<sup>1</sup> *Review of Reviews*, iii. 556.

This extraordinary woman, whose magnificent, scarred, and scowling features have become famous in three continents, was possessed of startling talents, unlimited audacity, and, above all (we surmise), of that personal magnetism so noticeable in all leaders of men. Her principal books, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, and *Isis Unveiled*, her lesser works, and her many articles in accredited magazines (published under the title *A Modern Panarion*, T.P.S.), carried her influence even where her restless personal activity never reached. Her information was encyclopædic, but altogether confused, always inaccurate, often entirely misleading, and wholly at the mercy of her riotous imagination.

The *chronique scandaleuse* of the early history of the Theosophical Society is in part to be found in Mr. Maskelyne's *Fraud of Theosophy Exposed*. It is of no interest to us to enter into these very sordid details: the career of Mrs. Eddy, with her much marrying and her amazing genius for quarrelling, equals, but does not actually surpass, Mme. Blavatsky's in these spheres of human conduct. Miss Mabel Collins, however, sometime co-editress with H. P. B. of the Theosophical periodical

*Lucifer*, has bequeathed to us a unique pen-portrait of her associate, which does indeed recognize in her certain characteristics of manner and of temperament by no means paralleled in the attenuated founder of Christian Science. We quote from Mr. Maskelyne's book, p. 62 :

"She (H. P. B.) taught me one great lesson. I learned from her how foolish, how 'gullible,' how easily flattered human beings are, taken *en masse*.<sup>1</sup> Her contempt for her kind was on the same gigantic scale as everything else about her, except her marvellously delicate taper fingers. She had a greater power over

<sup>1</sup> This corresponds with what I have been assured by the only person I know who was personally acquainted with Mme. Blavatsky in India. He described her to me as a vastly entertaining woman, who neither had any illusions left, nor sought to impose any when dealing with men of the world. Her sense of humour appears to have been riotously developed; and this would seem a unique phenomenon in the case of the leaders of modern Theosophy, who, in common (it is true) with the founders and protagonists of most modern cults, would seem to be entirely devoid of it. I have read quantities of Theosophist literature without detecting the slightest suggestion that its authors ever laughed. Not a twinkle flickered in their eye; their firm mouths never twitched. At most a mystical and half-melancholy smile, or perhaps an acid curling of the lip, altered their countenance, solemn habitually, scornful, or righteously indignant.

the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist,<sup>1</sup> a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred of those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow-beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person. These, I suppose, must be reckoned as her vices, though whether a creature so indifferent to all ordinary standards of right and wrong can be held to have virtues or vices I know not."

Here, then, is an amusing and truly illuminative account of a highly interesting personality with which it would have been instructive and delightful to come in contact; but one more different, in every detail which may be supposed to count, from what modern Theosophy sets up as its ideal, it would be difficult to imagine. Yet H. P. B. was in close touch with the Mahâtmas, and apparently was, or almost became, one herself.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Maskelyne says she turned the scale at seventeen stone.

Col. Olcott, especially after H. P. B.'s circumstantial stories began to be refuted (and her romances about Tibet and the charms of Lh'asa have been dissipated, not only by the reports of the explorer, Mr. Rockhill, but by the observation of our own soldiery), perceived her to be a "dual personality," at one moment "a fibbing Russian woman," at another, inspired. But most mediums, like Eusapia Palladio, for instance, seem to oscillate between obvious fraud and the inexplicable.

(ii.) MRS. ANNIE BESANT

The following outline of Mrs. Besant's career is drawn from her own *Autobiography*,<sup>1</sup> and thus may be condoned the mention of intimate details which, had they been the acquisitions of private research, should, in the history of a living personage, have been omitted.

Annie Wood was born in London on 1st October 1847, though "three-quarters of my blood and all my heart are Irish. . . . The Irish tongue is musical to my ear, and the Irish nature dear to my heart" (pp. 13, 14). Her

<sup>1</sup> Fisher Unwin, pp. 368, 1893. Her *Autobiographical Sketches*, Freethought Publishing Company, pp. 169, 1885, carry her story no further than 1879, the year of the Knowlton pamphlet prosecution.



father, indeed, was the son of a Devonshire man who had married an Irish girl, and her mother's descent was pure Irish. Mr. Wood was a scholar and a philosopher, and "deeply and steadily sceptical." He indulged in "light, playful mockery of the tenets of the Christian faith"; he "partly rationalized" his wife's "dainty and well-bred piety," till, abandoning such views as "eternal punishment, the vicarious atonement, the infallibility of the Bible, the equality of the Son with the Father," etc., she found peace in the mental atmosphere of "Jowett, Colenso, and Stanley." Mr. Wood's mother and sister were "strict Roman Catholics," but the priest whom they "forced" into his sick-room was "promptly ejected by the wrath of the dying man, and by the almost fierce resolve of his wife that no messenger of the creed he detested should trouble her darling at the last" (pp. 22, 23).

His daughter, however, took her "religion strenuously"; she was the "stuff of which fanatics are made"; was always "too religious." She nearly became a Catholic (p. 24), had visions and dreams, and associated with angels, fairies, and dragons. She was often in fancy martyred, by Roman judge and Dominican inquisitor, on the rack and at the stake. Devoted

to *Paradise Lost*, she always hoped that Jesus, her "ideal Prince," would somehow save the "beautiful shadowed Archangel" (p. 24). Meanwhile Miss Marryat, sister of the novelist, imparted to her an admirably wise and practical education, and took her to Germany and France. Mrs. Besant narrates this early life of hers, in its austere and evangelical setting, with singular charm and affection. She is confirmed in France; and not all the increasing independence to which Miss Marryat strives to train her (p. 53) fails to check her increasing tendency to mysticism and ritual. She pores over the Fathers, studies Keble, Liddon, and Pusey, fasts and scourges herself (p. 57). The Crucifix claims her ecstatic love. In the Holy Week of 1866 she writes out, in parallel columns, the Gospel accounts of the Passion, hoping thus to serve her piety. Their "discrepancies" chill her with a first doubt (p. 61). She stifles it. But she has seen her ghost. She will never be the same again.

In 1867, ignorant of the nature of matrimony, and unskilled in money matters or domestic life, she "drifts" (p. 70) into engagement and marriage with the Rev. F. Besant, adored as a "priest," but never loved as husband. This

clergyman, precise, methodical, authoritative, and easily angered, demanded a submission impossible to a girl "impulsive, very hot-tempered, and proud as Lucifer." Incredulous wonder, then indignant tears, ended in "a proud, defiant resistance, cold and hard as iron" (p. 81). She tried to kill thought and to vary the unromantic duties of a home by writing; she fell ill; she brooded over the cruel and inexplicable suffering of her children, and passed thus into a struggle of three years and two months "which transformed me from a Christian into an Atheist" (p. 88). Her religious doubts increased; she contemplated suicide. She resolved "to take Christianity as it had been taught in the churches, and carefully and thoroughly examine its dogmas one by one, so that I should never again say 'I believe' where I had not proved" (p. 99). She read widely, and always on "liberal" lines: Voysey welcomed her; Pusey repelled her; Thomas Scott, whose house was "a veritable heretical salon" (p. 113), accepted anonymous essays from her pen. She abandoned belief in Christ's Divinity, and, with it, Communion.<sup>1</sup> In 1873

<sup>1</sup> But when her mother lay dying, she refused to receive Communion, however necessary to salvation, unless Annie

she left her husband ; legal separation was to follow (p. 118).

She now earned a miserable pittance as cook, governess, and nurse. She studied at the British Museum and wrote heterodox pamphlets for Thomas Scott ; she faced semi-starvation with characteristic and indomitable pluck.

After facing the question : Is Christ God ? and answering it, No, she faced the ultimate problem : Does God exist ? She had abandoned prayer as a " blasphemous absurdity," and " God fades out of the daily life of those who never pray " (p. 133).

At this crisis she happened on a copy of the *National Reformer*. She inquired through it the conditions of admission to the National Secular Society, and was told that " we can see no logical resting-place between the entire acceptance of authority, as in the Roman Catholic Church, and the most extreme Rationalism." She need not profess herself an Atheist, but must accept the principles of the Society. She sent in her name as an active worker.

took it with her. " I would sooner be lost with darling Annie than saved without her." Her daughter explained the case fully to Dean Stanley, who made no difficulty about administering Communion to mother and daughter alike (pp. 122-125).

It was Charles Bradlaugh who gave her her certificate.

In the *Autobiography* there follows a chapter on "Atheism as I knew and taught it" (pp. 141-175), of which we need say but little, as our concern is with Theosophy. Her atheism was "dogmatic" only in so far as she asserted that there was no God in any of the senses assigned or assignable to that word by human intelligence, though underneath the Many she recognized the One. She had, however, to be rebuked by Bradlaugh for writing, "There is no God"; and was made to alter this. Further, her "passionate desire for the betterment of the world, the elevation of humanity" (p. 153), led her earnestly to seek a new basis for morality, since she considered herself to have destroyed what she supposed the only ethical foundation hitherto, revelation and intuition. Her new basis was Utility (p. 154). She discarded the Man of Sorrows, "with weary eyes gazing up to heaven because despairing of earth," for the "fair ideal Humanity of the Atheist, . . . perfect in physical development as the Hercules of Grecian art, . . . the free man who knows no lord, . . . who relies on his own strength" (p. 158). "Virtue is its own reward" (p. 160);

and faith in Evolution shows her the "sources of evil and the method of its extinction" (p. 164). Strong in this "creed" and the ethical programme consequent upon it, she lives "from 1874 to 1886, and with some misgivings to 1889" (p. 169).

Meanwhile she lectures and writes on social, political, and freethought topics with indescribable vivacity, with a total neglect of health, comfort, and reputation, and with that personal communication which won for her enthusiastic devotion when it did not provoke abuse, slander, persecution, and even assault and physical violence.

In 1877 Dr. Charles Knowlton's pamphlet, advocating the artificial limitation of families, brought about the prosecution of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, who published the pamphlet as a sort of test case to see whether the "population question" could be freely discussed in England. This roused a storm of obloquy, and Mrs. Besant was legally deprived of the custody of her daughter as she already had been of that of her little son. The New Malthusianism which Mrs. Besant at this period did so much to propagate, she abandoned in 1891 (p. 237), when Theosophy had untaught her the material-



ism on which alone she saw that that practice and theory could be founded.

Chapter X. of the *Autobiography* is well entitled "At War all Round." "Christianity had robbed me of my child, and I struck mercilessly at it in return" (p. 245). She was constantly in the law courts, or in violent conflict with distinguished persons on every conceivable subject. In 1884 she definitely turned her attention to Socialism (p. 299). She met Hyndman and Shaw, and joined the Fabians. But the Socialists were bitterly opposed to Bradlaugh; she now hampered, not helped, his political career, and had to resign the co-editorship of the *National Reformer*, breaking thus a close association of thirteen years (p. 321). But from this "turmoil and stress" dawned a fairer vision, a "New Brotherhood," a Church, to be founded largely with the co-operation of Mr. Stead. She flung herself with increasing ardour into organized philanthropy.

But ever "since 1886 there had been slowly growing up a conviction that my philosophy was not sufficient; that life and mind were other than, more than, I had dreamed" (p. 339). Psychology, hypnotism, "fact after fact came hurtling in." "Into the darkness shot a ray of

light"—A. P. Sinnett's *Occult World*. She takes to Spiritualism, finds its phenomena "indubitable" and "real," but the "spiritualistic explanation of them was incredible" (*ibid.*). One evening a "voice that was later to become to me the holiest sound on earth," bids her take courage: light is near. A fortnight passes, and Mr. Stead offers to her two large volumes to review. They are H. P. B.'s *Secret Doctrine*. A miracle of conversion occurs. She is introduced to H. P. B., is fascinated, struggles against the fascination, yields, and on 10th May 1889 is admitted as a Fellow of the Theosophical Society (p. 344). She sees that Science answers the *how* of much, the *why* of nothing. Experience and intuition alone suffice, and these are hers. "I *know*, by personal experiment, that the Soul exists, . . . that it can leave the body at will, . . . that the great sages spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky exist; that they wield powers and possess knowledge before which our control of Nature . . . is as child's play" (p. 346). Her secularist friends—Bradlaugh soberly, Foote with virulence—denounce her; but the new period of storm is quickly over.

She has lived since then at "peace" in Theosophical contemplation and propaganda.

Established at the ancient religious centre, Benares, she was visited, and her romantic seclusion was described, by M. Pierre Loti, in his idealizing romance, *L'Inde sans les Anglais; vers Bénarés*, c. vi., 1903. Since then she has revisited England.

From this sketch we may be enabled to trace in Mrs. Besant the consequences of race, education, and temperament; to recognize the sources of her tenacity, her other-worldly enthusiasm, and her scepticism; to observe the permanence of congenital tendencies, even when temporarily suppressed and diverted. We can regard with sympathy her warm and frank, impulsive yet loyal character; her partisanship so keen as unconsciously to transcend all doubt and even scruple; her eloquence and information so popular and varied as not to escape the reproach of vulgarity, of superficiality, and of inaccuracy. Her infectious enthusiasm, her versatility and organizing power, will continue to make her the centre of devoted followers until her eremitical retirement quenches a notoriety perhaps dependent upon advertisement, and leaves the movement for which she did so much to stand or fall by its intrinsic merits.

## (iii.) THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The Theosophical Society was, as we have said, founded in New York on 17th November 1875 by Col. Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky. This was immediately due to the promises of a Mr. Felt that he would impart to the associates instruction "concerning those secret laws of Nature which were so familiar to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but are totally unknown by our modern world of science." Mr. Felt failed; however, to redeem his pledge, and the Society did little, in its corporate capacity, to realize its then highly complicated programme. In 1878 it was to be amalgamated with an Indian society; this failed also; but the founders migrated to India and there remodelled the Society. Its objects were:

- (i.) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.
- (ii.) To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So *Key*, Appendix, p. 308, etc. But this curious formula now reads: "To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science." The last clause of (iii.) now runs: "and the powers latent in man."

- (iii.) To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers of man.

It is constantly emphasized that the Society concentrates its attention upon the first two of these objects, and reduces the third to a secondary position, and, in fact, deprecates the average student's pursuing it. This is because the development of latent powers is held to occur frequently in people who are ignorant of how to use them; and also because at best they cannot afford ultimate proof of what is supremely important (*e.g.* the nature and destiny of the soul: the meaning of life), though they can afford light upon certain subsidiary problems (*e.g.* the nature of matter and of thought, or of the independent activities of the soul).

The headquarters of the T.S. are at Adyar, a suburb of Madras. It is, however, important to notice that in 1898 a schism occurred which rent from the main body a very considerable number of American Theosophists. These are now organized under the leadership of Mrs. Katherine Tingley at Point Loma, California, under the name of the United Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. She eliminates entirely the parent and numerically preponderant body

from her reckonings, and considers herself third in succession from Mme. Blavatsky, Mr. W. Quan Judge being the second. Col. Olcott, in whose four series of *Old Diary Leaves* a very interesting "true history" of the T.S. is to be found, narrates under the date 1892 the story of his own resignation, and speaks of the "treacherous policy" and "lack of principle" of Mr. Judge, who is said to have laboured to evict Col. Olcott, and to have forged numerous letters from Mahâtmas; H. S. O. adds, alluding to one of Judge's accusations: "Without making any pretensions to exceptional goodness, I certainly never did anything to warrant him in making, in a forged letter, my own teacher and adored Guru seem to say that if Mrs. Besant should carry out her intention of visiting India, she might run the risk of my poisoning her."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Judge, indignant at Mrs. Besant's comments on the provenance of his so-called Mahâtma letters, issued a manifesto in which

<sup>1</sup> *Old Diary Leaves*, 1910, p. 507; cf. pp. 323, 433, etc. In Germany, too, there are those who say: I am of Lehmann, I of Müller, and I of Schulze. One group wishes to see the movement rationalized; another, moralized; others are "independents." The English schism started when Mr. G. R. S. Mead, editor of *The Quest*, ceased to co-operate in the editorship of the *Theosophical Review*. Cf. Zimmermann, *l.c.*, p. 483.

he declared Mrs. Besant's headship to be at an end, for three reasons :

“(1) Mrs. Besant [he wrote] has practised witchcraft and tried her weird spells, her ‘psychic experiments,’ on Mr. Judge and others.

“(2) Mrs. Besant has pronounced one of the letters of the Mahâtma, which was precipitated in an orthodox manner and passed on to Mr. Sinnett, ‘a fraud by H. P. B. herself, made up entirely, and not from the Master.’ If that letter be a fraud, then all the rest sent through our old teacher are the same.

“(3) Mrs. Besant, in league with a Hindu named Chakravarti and others, has quite flooded the Society with documents from phantasmal Mahâtmas and ‘black magicians.’ They had all sorts of letters sent me from India, with pretended messages from the Master. The plot exists among the black magicians, who ever war against the white.”

Mr. Maskelyne quotes this and other material from the *Westminster Gazette* for the months following H. P. B.'s death, when the storm broke. We repeat that we have no intention of laughing at Theosophy or Theosophists. Caricature is the easiest thing in the world, and what cannot be caricatured must either be

as simple and as perfect as a sphere or a cube, or must be devoid of all salient features and marked characteristics, and therefore of all interest. For my part, I consider many of the elements of modern Theosophical doctrine to be not only deeply interesting but extraordinarily important; and although I think they have been stated and dealt with infinitely better, before and since this movement started, in quite a number of quarters, that is no reason for refusing to examine the Theosophical manipulation of these elements.

To return, however, to the T.S. To become a member, all one need do is to give in one's name (the question of subscriptions seems to be variously answered according to time and place) with the intention of studying Oriental literature, though Mrs. Besant declares that the first object alone is obligatory. However, much emphasis is laid precisely on study as being, after behaviour, the best way of promoting that toleration which is the necessary preliminary, it is held, to universal brotherly love. "The members of the T.S. at large are free to profess whatever religion or philosophy they like—or none, if they so prefer—provided they are in sympathy, etc. . . .



The Society is a philanthropical and scientific body for the propagation of the idea of brotherhood on *practical* instead of theoretical lines. . . . Theosophist is who Theosophy does " (*Key*, p. 20. I quote the 2nd T.P.S. edition, 1890).

The one doctrine which is tabooed is, that any particular existing (or possible) institution is in possession of Truth in a manner even relatively exclusive or complete. Members must be prepared to gain new truths or to revise their old beliefs from whatever quarter the revelation may proceed, or under whatever new illumination. It is clear, then, that no form of religion, even of Christianity, is excluded from its pale save the Catholic Church, which undoubtedly believes itself to be in possession of a unique revelation, as adequate as is possible in view of human limitations; that any truth elsewhere existing is not only fragmentary in itself, but is contained fully and in a higher form in Catholic Christianity; that the Church alone is guaranteed to interpret Christianity with official accuracy; that she cannot obtain substantially new information from other sources; that she cannot substantially revise and re-interpret her doctrine; that special revelations accorded to individuals can but be fuller state-

ments and appreciations of her own teaching, and must be tested by it. The comprehensiveness and exclusiveness of this claim is undoubtedly responsible for the peculiar acerbity of language with which Theosophists habitually allude to orthodox Catholicism.

The fellows or members of the T.S. may be "attached" (to national branches) or "unattached" (having their diploma from Adyar). At first, a second group existed termed *esoteric*, definitely accepting the esoteric philosophy, believing in the existence of the "Masters" and in H. P. B. their messenger. In 1890 this "esoteric" group was christened *The Oriental School of Theosophy*; and above both groups exist the "Masters," in their mysterious seclusion in Tibet.

The tremendous propaganda of the T.S. succeeds best in the East. Buddhists and Brahmins, Parsees more recently, and even Islam, have been reached by it. Christian missionaries (*infra*, pp. 101, 102) have felt its active enmity.<sup>1</sup> Reading clubs, study clubs, groups, centres, "lodges" are units of propa-

<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Examiner*, 1903, p. 222; *Katholische Missionen*, xxxiii., Freiburg, 1904-5, p. 41; P. Suau, *L'Inde Tamoule*, Paris, 1901, p. 113.

ganda. The first International Congress was held at Amsterdam in 1904. Its president is Mrs. Besant, her monthly organ being *The Theosophist* (international, in varying forms). Mr. A. P. Sinnett is vice-president. There are twenty-two national sections, with nineteen national organs, and presidential agents in "non-sectionalized countries," *i.e.* Spain, South America, and Ireland. The journal for England and Wales is called *The Vâhan*: for children the *Lotus Journal* exists: *Orpheus* is a Theosophical art quarterly, and the *T.P.S. Booknotes* comments on recent literature allied, even remotely, with Theosophical ideals. We could make a long list of foreign publications. In Germany, which has some ten magazines, Dr. Rudolf Steiner is particularly zealous in organizing public conferences and discussions. Mrs. Besant's *Order of Service* (1908) connects the T.S. with social effort.

The T.S. has its motto: *No Religion is Higher than Truth*; and its badge: a serpent with its tail in its mouth makes a circle, within which two intertwined triangles, white and black, enshrine the *crux ansata* (☥), the *ankh* or "life" hieroglyph of Egypt. In a ring above is seen the Swastika cross †.

## II

### THE DOCTRINES OF THEOSOPHY

#### (i.) NAME AND HISTORY

THE name *Theosophy* is no modern formation. Ammonius Sakkas, father of Neo-Platonism,<sup>1</sup> claimed to have invented it, and since his time it has often been used to describe the method of reaching an *immediate intuition* of the Divine Nature and of all things only in their relation to it; and secondarily, the consequence of this, namely, a mysterious identification of the human, partial self with the universal and ultimate Self of God.<sup>2</sup> This ideal, and the effort to achieve it, have been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Appendix, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> So Brucker, in his *Critical History of Philosophy*, vol. iv., part i., p. 645, Leipzig, 1766: The Theosophists, "that strange brood of philosophers, unite in boasting that they are possessed of a divine and superhuman wisdom." So for Kant (*Works*, iii. p. 470, Leipzig, 1838; cf. Schelling, *Collected Works*, i. x. p. 184, Stuttgart, 1861) the essence of Theosophy is the immediate intuition of God and of all things in Him.

responsible in history for two main currents of activity : one of which, the higher, may be comprehensively called *Mysticism* ; the other, and lower, being fitly, though roughly, designated as *Magic*. Often, and in fact usually, outside of Christianity and of the Catholic Church in particular, the two are intertwined, and act reciprocally one upon the other. Magic may be described as the effort to achieve the ends, or the subordinate ends, or the effects of Mysticism by material or mechanical means. These latter practices have been as regularly condemned by the Catholic Church as the mystical ideal has been preached by her : in fact, the immediate vision of God, and a mode of union with Him transcending all intellectual formula and all sensible imagination, has been consistently put forward by Christianity as the destiny of every soul that passes from this life "in the Grace of God" ; and this Grace, the Church teaches, is the Love and the Life of the Father, the Incorporation with the Son, and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and exists substantially in the Christian soul. The most startling and sublime manifestations of sanctity are but the

expression of the interior triumph of this fact.<sup>1</sup>

Christian Mysticism passed from St. Paul and St. John, through writers like the pseudo-Dionysius, to Augustine, through him to an unbroken line of Catholic writers, such as the Victorines, the German mystics (*e.g.* St. Gertrude), St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure, Sts. Catherine of Siena and of Genoa; the Spanish school, St. Teresa, St. Peter of Alcantara. Its theory has been most recently described, with a view to practice, by Fr. Tissot, O.P., Fr. Poulain, S.J., and others.

A less reputable series of orthodox writers (*e.g.* Maria d'Agreda, Catherine Emmerich) must be noted. But it is noticeable that the line of Mysticism followed by Theosophists has been one divergent from the orthodox Catholic Mysticism, and passes by preference through medieval writers like Tauler and Eckhart, through the "illuminist" schools of contempla-

<sup>1</sup> The Catholic doctrine upon Mysticism is, in England, most easily available in the Rev. A. B. Sharpe's *Mysticism*, London, 1911; and a very full account in Miss E. Underhill's book, bearing the same name: Methuen, 1911. Miss Underhill's bibliography is the best anywhere available; she adopts an independent and tentative attitude.

tion, through J. Böhme to Swedenborg and the like.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Theosophy finds a very marked interest indeed, if we may judge by the literature it uses in its authoritative volumes (such as H. P. B.'s, and more modern works), in the results of magic and occultist investigation. This current passes through the degenerate Gnostics and Neo-Platonists, the Kabbalists,<sup>2</sup> and Renaissance figures like Cornelius Agrippa and "Paracelsus." Pico della Mirandola was a modernized Neo-Platonist. The occultist passion of the Templars and the Masons descends to the Rosicrucians of the nineteenth-century revival, to the "unknown

<sup>1</sup> The T.P.S. finds it worth while to advertise, under the heading *Christianity*, the works of Clement of Alexandria, of St. John of the Cross, Juliana of Norwich, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis of Sales, of Michael Molinos, Mme. Guyon, Tolstoy, Walter Hilton; the *Imitation*; books by Anglican thinkers, like Dr. Inge; by liberal scholars, like Arnold Meyer (*Jesus or Paul?*) or Wrede. In this it regards itself as true to its ideal of garnering any hint as to ultimate Christian meaning it can find. It includes, however, a worrying class of literature to which we allude later, pp. 118-121.

<sup>2</sup> For tenth-century Jewish Theosophy, see the admirable article by Dr. C. D. Ginsburg, "Kabbalah," *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed., xiii. 810a-814a. Mr. A. E. Waite's *Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah* contains much information of different sorts.

philosopher," L. C. de S. Martin, "Eliphaz Levi" (the ex-Abbé Constant), "Papus" (Dr. Encausse), and many moderns no less problematical. Students of the less wholesome vagaries of the human spirit will find much to interest them in the fantastic literature which deals, more or less faithfully, with these persons or schools.<sup>1</sup>

But Theosophy has a history backwards, as well as forwards, from the Neo-Platonists. Through the Græco-Judaic philosophy of Philo and Alexandria, and through the Gnostics, through isolated figures like Apollonius of Tyana (*infra*, p. 111), through schools of thought like some sects of Buddhism, the ideal and part of the practice of "contemplation" seeks back to the oldest philosophies of Hinduism and the Brahmins.<sup>2</sup>

Hence Theosophical libraries contain much work on Oriental religions and ethnology that is excellent, and good translations of Seneca,

<sup>1</sup> We may mention, without thereby recommending them, Mr. Bothwell-Gosse's *Knights Templars*, Max Heindel's books on the *Rosicrucians*, and Mr. Waite's other treatises, all published by the T.P.S.

<sup>2</sup> A. Arnould, President of the French Branch of the T.S. We shall designate him by his initials, A. A. Cf. *Les croyances fondamentales du Bouddhisme*, Paris, 1895, p. 5.



Marcus Aurelius, Plato, Plotinus, and the like. This, too, is why that distinguished Indian scholar, P. Oltramare, can call his studies of ancient Indian thought *L'Histoire des idées théosophiques dans l'Inde*, I., *La théosophie brahmanique* (Paris, 1907). But he apologizes for the distrust his title cannot but excite, nowadays especially, when "that title [*Theosophy*] is affixed to the strangest wares: an amalgam of mysticism, charlatanism, and thaumaturgic pretensions which have been combined, in the most unlikely fashion, with an almost childish anxiety to apply the method and terminology of science to transcendent matters. India itself could not but be besmirched by the ridicule and disfavour so justly incurred by the curious doctrines of Mme. Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant" (pp. ii., iii.). M. Paul Carty competently contrasts<sup>1</sup> M. Oltramare's work with Mrs. Besant's singularly unscientific study of Indian religions (*Four Great Religions: Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity*; and *The Religious Problem in India: Lectures on Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Theosophy*, combined in a French translation, *Les re-*

<sup>1</sup> *Études*, cxv., 1908, pp. 774-787.

*ligions pratiquées actuellement dans l'Inde, 1907).*<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar boast, then, of modern Theosophy is that it is in organic connection with the continuous current of human-divine effort witnessed to by this comprehensive history. For the whole notion of Theosophy is that it is a Divine Science, one and complete, existing from and to eternity, known in its entirety only to a mysterious confraternity of Masters, handed down from generation to generation of these Masters, and revealed by them to successive centuries in such measure and beneath such symbols as shall seem best suited to the assimilative capacity of each. Thus Theosophy is that wisdom which is the source of all religions, all philosophies, and all science.

<sup>1</sup> But, unfortunately, she can always appeal to the secret history, the occult tradition which she has received from its Oriental guardians, and, with regard to the origin, development, interrelation, meaning, and value of these cults, announce to her Eastern (and even Western) disciples conclusions at which, she frankly confesses, all normal science scoffs. We shall frequently have occasion to quote here the C.T.S. lectures on the *History of Religions*. We shall refer to them by the initials *L.H.R.* Those upon Buddhism, Hinduism, the Avesta, Egypt, Imperial Rome, the Greek Testament, St. Augustine (in parts), Christian Science, and the concluding lecture, might be consulted with profit in connection with the subject here being dealt with.

"*Theosophy* is not a religion. But something of Theosophy can be found under all religious symbols, in all religious dogmas, for the good reason that it is the RELIGION-SCIENCE whence have issued *all* religions and all sciences" (A. A., p. 5).

To the question "Is Theosophy a religion?" "It is not," answers H. P. B. (*cf. Key*, p. 1). "It is Divine Knowledge or Science." Similarly, "it is the doctrinal exposition of the Truths *demonstrated* by OCCULT SCIENCE" (A. A., p. 6; we carefully respect italics and capitals).

It will therefore be throughout remembered that Theosophy claims to be the method of obtaining the maximum amount of ultimate, inexhaustible Truth; and that ordinary men accept this for the most part on the authority (mediate, for the most part) of certain "Masters," or "Initiates." These, on their part, have gained it by direct intuition of that Absolute Reality of which they contain within themselves so much, and we so little.

"In the sense given to it by those who first used it," writes Col. Olcott,<sup>1</sup> "the word means divine wisdom, or the knowledge of divine things.

<sup>1</sup> *Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science*, 1885, p. 246.

The lexicographers handicap the idea with the suggestion that it meant the knowledge of God, the deity before their minds being a personal one; but such was not the intention of the first Theosophists. Essentially, a Theosophical Society is one which favours man's original acquisition of knowledge about the hidden things of the universe, by the education and perfecting of his own latent powers. *Theosophy differs as widely from philosophy as it does from theology* [italics ours]. It has been truly said that, in investigating the divine nature and attributes, philosophy proceeds entirely by the dialectic method, employing as the basis of its investigation the ideas derived from natural reason; theology, still employing the same method, superadds to the principles of natural reason those derived from authority and revelation. *Theosophy, on the contrary, professes to exclude all dialectical process, and to derive its whole knowledge of God from direct intuition and contemplation.* This Theosophy dates from the highest antiquity of which any records are preserved, and every original founder of a religion was a seeker after divine wisdom by the Theosophic process of self-illumination. Where do we find in our day the facilities for

pursuing this glorious study? Where are the training schools worthy to be the successors of those of the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, the Hierophants of Egypt, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, or—more especially—the Rishis of Aryavarta, noblest of all initiates, save only the stainless, the illuminated Gautama Buddha?”

This long passage has been quoted, not to suggest that Col. Olcott's history may have been derived mainly from H. P. B., nor yet to suggest that his rhetoric may be very bad, but to emphasize the fact that by basing their whole position on knowledge acquired by psychic processes unavailable to the ordinary man, Theosophists emancipate themselves forthwith from the obligation or even possibility of supplying ordinary proofs of what they say. This must never be forgotten when we read that they proffer no assertion save what has been proved up to the hilt. Their dogmas are based either on the *ipse dixit* of a Mahâtma, or on the data of peculiar illumination.

## (ii.) THE MAHÂTMAS

It is important that we should realize that the whole of Theosophy as a system is made to rest ultimately upon the assertions of these

Masters, upon their intervention in the lives of less favoured persons, and upon the correctness of the tradition dependent upon them. A. A. writes of these Guardians of the Immemorial Doctrine that "their number is great," that they are "Beings more completely developed than antecedent or existing humanity. These more advanced Beings have traversed the entire human course, and help their less advanced brethren. All humanity shall one day reach this degree of development, like that which Westerns assign to their anthropomorphic God," and then it will be their turn to help others (pp. 15, 16). For while "a few isolated individuals, borne on by a peculiar enthusiasm, a spiritual, moral, and physical hygiene and persevering toil," achieve the goal before their brothers (p. 46), and alone have evolved that sixth principle, or *Buddhi*, which is as superior to the intellect as the human soul is to the animal (p. 66), yet they can and do put off their entry into Nirvâna for the sake of teaching fragments of their lore to men, and may then be called *Buddhas of Compassion* (p. 49).<sup>1</sup> H. P. B.<sup>2</sup> rationalizes

<sup>1</sup> On *Buddhas of Compassion*, cf. *L.H.R.*, iv. 26 ; xxxiv. 27 ; and on *Nirvâna*, *ibid.*, iv. 26-28 ; iii. 26, 27 ; xxxiv. 13-31 ; *n.b.* pp. 18, 21, 27-29.

<sup>2</sup> *Key to Theosophy*, 1890, pp. 215, 288-303.

these Mahâtmas (=Great Spirits) not a little : though they guide and protect, yet they do not inspire the T.S. or the writings of its leaders (p. 299). So, too, Mrs. Besant<sup>1</sup> says they work for humanity, use the T.S. as an instrument, bless it, and help it at a crisis. Miss Lilian Edger, in a very convenient little book called *Elements of Theosophy*,<sup>2</sup> says of them that they can "function at will on any one of the three planes on which our evolution is proceeding." They work "unseen, unthanked, even as God Himself works in every form" (p. 121). From them come the inspirations of art, the intuitions of genius, and the promptings of heroism. From them come physical discoveries and spiritual movements. They appear, it may be, as men, and are misunderstood and persecuted. They may be called Initiates, Adepts, Magi, Hierophants, Mahâtmas, Elder Brothers, Great Souls, or Masters. We are told to number among them Pythagoras, Orpheus, Moses, Christ, St. Paul, St. John, Clement and Origen, Krishna and Buddha, high-priests of various cults (including that of

<sup>1</sup> *Introd. à la Théosophie*, tr., Paris, 1903, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> T.P.S., 1907 ; it is based on Mrs. Besant's *Ancient Wisdom*.

the Temple at Jerusalem), Alexander the Great, and many others.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence for their existence may indeed be its "metaphysical necessity."<sup>2</sup> It is postulated by the Law of Cyclic Evolution. The divine germ in man comes from and returns to God, through an uninterrupted series of more or less divine Beings. There cannot, therefore, *but* be Mahâtmas. However, H. P. B., H. S. O., A. B., and even humbler disciples, have been in epistolary communication with these Masters; and A. B., in *H. P. B. and the Masters*, collects a considerable amount of what she considers adequate evidence of their consorting with mankind.<sup>3</sup> The Lamas of Tibet (where they are usually domiciled) are said, however, to have denied their existence,<sup>4</sup> while Mr. Hodgson, in the service of the Society for Psychical Research, together with most independent students, will not admit it either.<sup>5</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> A. A., pp. 17-19. But H. P. B. calls Alexander (*Key*, p. 289) "a drunken soldier."

<sup>2</sup> So "Héra," in *Le Lotus Bleu* for Sept. 1904, pp. 193-199.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 10-20. "If human evidence can ever substantiate a fact, the appearance [and therefore existence] of the Masters is placed beyond the possibility of a doubt."

<sup>4</sup> *Month*, 1892, lxxiv. p. 333.

<sup>5</sup> *P.S.P.R.*, 1891, ix. p. 312.



those who do not grant its *a priori* necessity, the evidence of the few "eye-witnesses" seems, he argues, valueless; and so is the correspondence by which they, mistakenly enough, reveal their "miserable poor style" and ideas which are "absolute rubbish."<sup>1</sup>

Mme. Blavatsky, however, despises the attacks of the S.P.R., which she calls "a flock of stupid old British wethers, who had been led to butt at them by an over-frolicsome lambkin from Australia" (p. 297). If she is asked why the Masters do not appear to disprove the charges which are made against them, she asserts that they sometimes do, but that they usually despise to (*Key*, p. 295). She reiterates the argument that if they do *not* exist, then she herself has invented the entire contents of their philosophy and all the practical knowledge ascribed to them, so that since *she* exists, it doesn't really matter whether *they* do or don't (*ibid.*, p. 298); that to attempt to prove they do not exist is to wish to prove a negative; and, finally, that she wishes to goodness modern Theosophists had never mentioned Masters, Adepts, or Occult Knowledge (*ibid.*, pp. 300, 302).

<sup>1</sup> *Month*, 1892, lxxiv. p. 180.

The Catholic Church has a doctrine of Tradition, of Sainthood, and of the Beatific Vision and the "spiritual" body to which the saved are destined. Her saints are in certain cases held to share, temporarily and by anticipation and by pure favour of God, in some of the privileges proper or freely granted to the Blessed in heaven. She does not admit, however, that this Tradition is *secret*, or the possession of a few favoured individuals who dole it fragmentarily forth. Nor does she admit that these preternatural privileges can be reached by man's unaided effort. Still less, that saints are produced, or the Beatific Vision ensured, by any cyclic law of evolution. Further, Theosophists are constantly contrasting their "undeniable facts," "fully and absolutely demonstrated," with the "blind faith" of the Christian (*Key*, pp. 87, 218 *sqq.*). But on the one hand, the Christian maintains that the historical evidence bearing on the origin and course of Christianity, a comparison of it with other religious systems or traditions, his own spiritual experience, and certain abstract considerations, cumulatively justify his believing in its divinity, and therefore unique veracity. In consequence, neither before nor after his act of faith (to

make which, indeed, he is not *forced*, but led freely by the evidence, and helped, it is held, by grace) are his conclusions “blindly” reached. On the other hand, the Theosophist, do what he will, has ultimately to rest on the assertions of Masters whose existence is itself asserted mainly by H. P. B. and H. S. O. For the proof deduced from the philosophy of Theosophy is clearly cogent only for those who already admit that philosophy. Its appeal to the “results” of clairvoyance and clairsaudience are continual. But this philosophy is itself held true mainly because authoritatively imposed by the teaching of the Masters, and these criteria are valueless to those who do not yet admit all that they presuppose. Theosophists are therefore open to an accusation similar to that made, by superficial polemicists, against the Church — that Catholics believe the Scriptures to be inspired and unerring because the infallible Church says they are; and that the Church says so truthfully because the unerring Scriptures say she is infallible. To this the youngest controversialist would allege that the Scriptures, treated not as infallible, but as tested and humanly veracious documents, provide grounds for believing in the claims of the Church—among

others, in her divinely guaranteed veracity. She proceeds, making use of this, to give us further information concerning the very documents which led us to trust her. Here is no circular, but a legitimate spiral argument.

### (iii.) GOD

Mme. Blavatsky's *Key* is in the shape of a catechism; for the sake of brevity we shall condense slightly its questions and answers, without affecting, we trust, their bearing.

"Do you believe in God—the God of the Christians, the Biblical God?"

"In such a God we do not believe. We reject the notion of a personal, or an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God. The God of theology is a bundle of contradictions. We will have nothing to do with him."

"Then you are Atheists?" "Not that we know of. We believe in a Divine Universal Principle, the root of ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of Being. Our DEITY is everywhere, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality. IT does not (think); because it is *Absolute Thought* itself. Nor does it exist, as it is *Be-ness*, not a Being. Our Deity is the eternal, incessantly evolving, not creating

builder of the universe ; that universe *itself unfolding* out of its own essence. It is a sphere without circumference—ITSELF" (*Key*, pp. 61-66).

We will indicate here at the outset a confusion of thought which is responsible for many further regrettable ramifications of H. P. B.'s argument.

She thinks that because the human intelligence can only think of God in a human way, and because men cannot express their human thought save human-wise, therefore they assert God's nature in itself to be in essence of "human stuff," and that their concept claims adequately to define that nature, and their words adequately to express their definition. Of course, any acquaintance with elementary "theology" would show that all orthodox text-books make the essential "inadequateness" of our idea of God a presupposit in whatever else is said of Him. What we know of Him is not false, in the sense that it is positively misleading, but it falls short of Him, not only in amount (as though by a further course of study we could ultimately fill up all its gaps), but in kind and essence ; all that we know of "being" is gathered from derived, dependent, limited, and changeable existence, whereas God's Being is

underived, absolute, infinite, and immutable. Were a Catholic to assert that he had, con-naturally, a direct (or deduced) and essentially adequate knowledge of the nature of God, and were able thus to offer an intellectually exhaustive definition of His nature, he would be condemned as wholly unorthodox, and, in fact, no Catholic. Catholic theology, moreover, asserts, more clearly than does anything quoted above from H. P. B., that God is eternal and omnipresent. He does not exist in time, but His entire existence is simultaneously co-present with every part of time; nor is He spatially extended, but present in His entirety in every part, or conceivable part, of space. It is no less untrue to suppose that theologians, because they say that God has all the perfections of personality, therefore assert that He has all the limitations of individual persons as we experience them, than to suggest that because His nature is said by them to transcend the Cosmos, therefore He is excluded from that Cosmos. Where H. P. B. is supremely right is where she insists on the "absolute" nature of God, which is infinite and unqualified. Where she is chiefly wrong, according to Catholic theology, is where she

suggests that He *is* the Universe, or evolves into it.<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Hull, in his *Theosophy and Christianity*, works out in various ways the antagonism between the Theosophical and Christian systems of theology and their "moral" consequences; that is to say, what follows from them in human action. He indicates that :

The Theosophist's concept of the Supreme is *purely negative*, or a denial of any predicate which we can make of other things.<sup>2</sup> "It is not consciousness,"<sup>3</sup> and it is not unconsciousness, etc. Nothing which we can predicate of other things can be predicated about God. On the other hand, the Christian conception is

<sup>1</sup> On human knowledge of the Divine Essence, *cf. L.H.R., St. Augustine*, xx. pp. 14, 26; *St. Thomas Aquinas*, xxii. pp. 10-12, 21-27.

<sup>2</sup> This "negative way" of describing God is, of course, perfectly familiar to Christian philosophy and mysticism, and has been so from the beginning; it is contained, in its essence, in a number of passages both of the Old and New Testament. But never at any moment has Hebrew or Christian religion failed to use, together with the negative path of *denying* human perfections in God, in so far as they are limited and dependent, the positive method of *affirming* these perfections of Him, in so far as they can be conceived of as perfections, and not as in any way conditioned. In the Old Testament, God is essentially revealed as He who *Is*; in the New, as Father of all.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Hull is quoting Mr. Vimadalal in *East and West* for Jan. 1904.

positive, with only the negation of limits and imperfections. Hence we can predicate of God what we predicate of other things—always with the proviso that our predication, though on the right lines, goes not far enough. The Christian God is thinkable in an imperfect manner; the Theosophical God is not thinkable at all.

Yet, even so, the Theosophist cannot evade the question. He will persist in thinking about God. He calls it the causeless cause, the rootless root, the one, the eternal, the all. . . . To be consistent he must go on to say that all these predications are likewise futile—that it is just as true to say that it is *not* a root, and *not* a principle, and *not* a cause, etc. In short, properly speaking, the only thing for the Theosophist to do is to define the Supreme as O=infinity, and there let the matter drop (part v. p. 11).

It is also true to say that once we admit that in our conception of God there is a legitimately “positive” element, it is clear that further “revelation,” which our unaided reasoning might never achieve, may be made concerning the Deity in this positive aspect, as, for instance, that God is a “Father,” and so “loved



His creation, the world, that He was willing to 'give' His only begotten Son" for its redemption. Here, too, remembering the law of "analogy" which affects all that human wit can grasp of God, we shall say that whatever positive truth these human notions contain is meant to be predicated by the Catholic of God; whatever limitations or dependences they imply are by him denied.

Since this question of the character of our knowledge of God is of itself sufficient completely to differentiate systematic Theosophy from orthodox Christianity, we have dwelt upon it at some length.

#### (iv.) THE UNIVERSE

##### (a) *Its Origin*

Now, whether the universe *emanates* from God (as "ray from sun"), or is "immanent" in Him (as "drop in ocean"), or is Himself (as my dream is me), is nowhere definitely exposed: and no wonder, since metaphors confound the clearest thought. Still, it is to *idealistic* Pantheism, as we know it, that Theosophy inclines. There is no creation, but "periodical and consecutive appearances of the universe from the subjective on to the objective plane

of being." This is the "Cycle of Life," the "Days and Nights of Brahma," or the time of *Manvantara* and that of *Pralaya* (dissolution). (This process is) Eternal *reality* casting a periodical reflection of itself on the infinite spatial depths. This reflection "is a temporary illusion, and, as flitting personalities, so are we" (*Key*, pp. 83-85). "In Eternity," M. Arnould reminds us (p. 12), "there is but a single moment, ALWAYS. If, for a single moment, there had been nothing, there would always have been NOTHING. *Before* creation, as *after*, is Eternity! Where seize, where place, the moment of Creation? It exists not! It cannot exist! The periods (of activity and rest) can be compared to the double rhythmic beating of the heart. There is a great rhythmic throbbing in the Infinite, in the UNIQUE ALL, which causes transitory forms to emanate, wherethrough the UNIQUE SPIRIT circulates and develops and re-absorbs them."

Mrs. Besant, in a lecture given in London on 1st July 1904, exposed the Theosophic mode of Pantheism in terms more sympathetic to English hearers. Yet the theology of Theosophy, she frankly declares, is "Pantheist: God is all, and all is God."<sup>1</sup> H. P. B. rejects Pantheism, at least in so far as its "real and primitive meaning has been distorted by blind

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Theosophy" in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 642, London, 1903; and *Why I became a Theosophist*, *ibid.*, 1891, p. 18.

prejudice and a onesidedness of view. If you accept the Christian etymology of this compound word, and form it of *pan* (πᾶν), 'all,' and *theos* (θεός), 'God,' and then imagine and teach that this means that every stone and every tree in Nature is a God or the ONE God, then, of course, you will be right, and make of Pantheists fetish-worshippers" (*Key*, p. 63). But one must etymologize the word, she goes on, "esoterically." This passage is very characteristic of H. P. B., whose mantle has, to this extent, fallen on the shoulders of Mrs. Eddy.<sup>1</sup> The Catholic philosopher will observe that if God "evolves" into the universe, then either He *is* it and each of its parts, and thus is limited, for they are finite; or He is *not*, and then Pantheism is no solution. If, moreover, God, in Himself, "evolves," His later stages of evolution are either more or less perfect than His earlier. If less, He has dwindled, which the Infinite cannot do; if more, He has gained perfection from elsewhere than Himself, which the Infinite cannot do either. H. P. B.'s formulæ, which claim to *explain* God's being and relation to the universe, are at least no *more* satisfactory than the Catholic, which do not

<sup>1</sup> *L.H.R., Christian Science*, xxxvii. pp. 19, 20.

profess to explain, but so to state the fact that the complementary truths of God's immanence and transcendence may be safeguarded in the human intellect and consequently in human behaviour.

The Indian terms quoted above are not only used by Theosophists as symbols, but are explained in materialistic detail. A *Manvantara* comprises 360,000,000 years,<sup>1</sup> and, together with a *Pralaya*, composes the 100 billions (and more) years of a world period, or *Kalpah*. During a *Pralaya* (putting the thing in its Indian form) only Brahmā (neuter) exists—*Sat*, the Unknowable and Absolute. A new *Manvantara* dawns: Brahmā (masc.) awakes. At once He sees, "Nothing exists." Forthwith we have the opposition of Being and Not Being, the Duality, *sat-avidya*. The vision of the "being" that once was recurs to Him—Brahma's own revelation, *Mahât*, the third "logos." The Trinity, *Sat*, *Sat-avidya*, *Mahât*, is complete. The out- and in-breathings of Brahma then make and reabsorb the Universe.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. P. B. in the Glossary to *Key*, says 4,320,000,000. Brahmā's day consists of 4,320,000,000 years. Brahmā's Age = 100 years of 3,110,400,000,000 solar years each.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, p. 391; cf. J. C. Chatterji, *Der Pfad der Vervollkommenung*, Leipzig, p. 14.

Mrs. Besant develops her doctrine as follows : The Universe is created by the emanation of the great breath of the Unity. The Logos or Word, leaping from the Silence, is a first Trinity in a triple aspect : the First is a Substance not to be conceived nor imagined ; the Second, Spirit in matter, energy in form, etc., at the root of all that is on its way to existence, essence of spirit, essence of matter, still inconceivable by our intelligence. The Third aspect is intelligence, universal consciousness, existence within the limits of the manifested. One Logos pervades the whole, from the highest spirit to the tiniest grain of sand (*Introd.*, p. 21). And in the lecture above quoted she reminds the Bishop of London that Theosophists do indeed believe in the Trinity, inasmuch as Logos is the name they give to the nature of God *as manifest*, a triple Logos, appearing first as "Will, root of existence" ; second, as "Divine Wisdom, knowledge inspired by love" ; and thirdly, as "Creative Activity, Creator Spirit, immanent in all matter and form."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Below this purer form of divine activity comes a hierarchy of lesser spirits, the "gods" of Hindu, Chaldean, and Egyptian religions ; the Archangels of the Christians ; the Lords, *Planetary Spirits*, of "esoteric philosophy" ; for they preside over the evolution of worlds, construct

We confess that this fanciful and obscure adaptation of the Greek category of Logos<sup>1</sup> is far less sympathetic to us than the frequent application by Theosophists of the beautiful Indian myths in their modernized form. Thus in the *Bhâgavata Purâna* we can read of the vast and aboriginal expanse of waters, silent and motionless. Beneath it, Vishnu-Narayana lies asleep on the coiled serpent of Eternity. "He awakes, and becomes conscious of a desire for renewed activity and manifestation."<sup>2</sup> So he sends forth from himself a radiant lotus, which floats upon the water. Ripples spread forth around it, and when, in its midst, appears the god of creation, Brahmâ, the "ripples grow into waves, until the whole ocean began to rise and fall with the mighty vibrations of Narayana's thought." Such was the beginning of the world-process, and it is beautifully pictured,

universes, direct cosmic forces. Lesser gods, "angels," Elementals (of a lofty kind) steer the forces of Nature on a lower plane, till we reach those baser sprites that occult lore and magic can control. The Roman Church has forgotten less than the others of the stored science, on these points, of Christian Fathers and their contemporaries (*ibid.*, p. 21 *sqq.*, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. C. Martindale, *The Word of God, Pagan and Jewish Background*, Rugby, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> L. Edger, *Elements, etc.*, p. 59.

attempting no suggestion of why the sleeping God slept, or woke, or "became conscious" of a "desire," nor to whom he wished to manifest himself, nor how all this took place without his "changing" or sacrificing (if he possessed it) infinity; nor whence the "waters" came. We have quoted this as a good example of the *illustrative, not explanatory*, myth; were Theosophy content to keep to this application of the myths it utilizes, Catholic philosophy would have less to say against it. As it is, the Catholic system would claim not only to be in possession of a divinely sanctioned description of the beginning of things, no less pregnant with meaning for the thinker, and more easily dealt with by the simple, but that in the interpretation of this it is securely guarded from those erroneous philosophical, historical, and practical deductions to which the stories of Creation, other than those enshrined in Judaic tradition, give invariable and most natural occasion.

The curious doctrine of the interior pulsation, so to call it, of the Ultimate Essence—which in a certain "mythical" form was very well known to Plato—has been criticized with accuracy by Fr. Hull (*op. cit.*, part v. p. 7 *sqq.*):—

“Is the universe a sort of complement of the divine being? Is multiplication of souls and matter a sort of climax of divine perfection? . . . As far as we can see it is just the reverse. The Theosophic God is some primary kind of being which undergoes a change. This change consists of an emanative process by which the primary divine essence blossoms out as it were into souls and matter. Apparently this blossoming out is a kind of imperfection. The mixture of souls with matter is a work to be undone; and the undoing is a return to a higher and purer state. *God plus souls*—we may say, using concrete terms—is worse than God alone; and the consummation of things lies in obliterating souls and matter, and restoring the *status quo* of *God plus nothing*. . . .” “At the root of Theosophical metaphysics [Mr. Beaman, with whom Fr. Hull is disputing, writes] lies involution of mind in matter—with an irresistible tendency on the part of mind to evolve through matter to its former purity. Human souls are parts of the divine essence involved in matter; and the duty of each soul is to oppose the tendencies of his material envelope, and work out its own purification.” This is nothing if not saying that



the divine essence lowers itself by involution with matter, and has to raise itself again from that temporary degradation. . . .

“(But) infinite being cannot be thought of as degenerating into a multiplicity of finite particles of essence called souls, mixed up in a degrading manner with other finite particles of essence called matter. The whole cyclic process of fluctuation in the state of God’s essence is utterly unthinkable. Whereas the Christian theology of the divine unchangeability is only *negatively* unthinkable, the view above delineated is *positively* self-contradictory when analysed.”

### (b) *Its Structure*

Theosophists teach that the world consists of seven interpenetrating planes, the physical, the astral, the mental,<sup>1</sup> the Buddhic, the Nirvânic, Parinirvâna, and Mahâparinirvâna planes (those, that is, of Enlightenment, of Nirvâna, of full, and of great-full Nirvâna). It must be noticed that when these planes are

<sup>1</sup> This word has been substituted for Devachanic, which Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, in his *Devachanic Plane*, regrets having been obliged to retain. In his added note he says he has found it to be “etymologically inaccurate” and “misleading.”

spoken of as successive, or a "series," they are not conceived as superimposed, but as occupying the same space. For "spirit" is for the Theosophist only the "purer" manifestation of that of which matter is the "grosser": each purer plane is composed of atoms so much finer than those of the inferior plane that the former can exist and vibrate in the spaces left vacant between the latter. Each, consequently, has its special dimension, time, mode of consciousness, and inhabitants.

Into the history of our own evolving world we have no space to go fully. It rises in a septuple spiral, mankind passing through seven cycles corresponding to the planets.

"Each scheme of evolution is worked out by means of a series of seven manvantaras. Each manvantara includes an evolutionary process, such as that set forth in Theosophic teaching in reference to the seven rounds of our planetary chain. As each round includes a world-period of activity on each planet in turn, and as each of these world-periods is divided into seven great racial cycles, we may get a view of the proportionate magnitude of a race-period — itself extending over some millions of years—as compared with the whole

system to which we belong, if we bear in mind the following progression :—

“ Seven root race-periods make up one world-period.

“ Seven world-periods (following each other on as many planets in succession), one round.

“ Seven rounds, one manvantara.

“ Seven manvantaras, one scheme of evolution.

“ Seven schemes of evolution (more or less contemporaneous in their activity), the solar system.”<sup>1</sup>

The various planets originally formed were grouped by degrees into seven great schemes of evolution. Mr. Sinnett knows the exact value in the total scheme of each planet and its race. Thus “ the manvantara of the Jupiter scheme now in progress is only the third of the septenary series,” while “ the Jupiter family is only in the second round of its third manvantara, and its physical planet therefore is not yet fitted to be the abode of physical life.” Mars is “ the planet behind the earth in the order of progress round the entire chain, and Mercury in advance of us. A large portion of the present human family has actually lived on Mars—where,

<sup>1</sup> A. P. Sinnett, *Growth of the Soul*, 1896, p. 265.

could we but visit the planet now, as, indeed, some of our more advanced companions can and do, we should still find archæological traces of our passage" (*ibid.*, p. 274). In Venus, "the foremost of its beings in great numbers represent, as compared with our humanity, a fairly god-like degree of exaltation. From Venus, as all students of esoteric teaching will be aware, the guardians of our infant humanity in the later third and early fourth race of this world-period descended to stimulate in our family the growth of the manasic principle, and to them we owe the fact that as we stand at present we are in truth somewhat further advanced in evolution than our actual place in our own scheme strictly entitles us to be" (p. 276). This is explained by the fact that "the Venus scheme, as already stated, is in the seventh round of its fifth manvantara, we of the earth chain being at present in our fourth round. This means that the humanity of the Venus chain was already on spiritual levels immensely higher than those of our humanity when we were still struggling on in the earlier phases of our evolution during this earth-period. Thus it came to pass that some of the representatives of the Venus chain

Adeptship, availing themselves of possibilities having to do with immensely exalted spiritual planes common to the whole solar system, transferred themselves to this earth for a time during part of the third and early fourth race, and took part in the teaching and guidance of our comparatively infant humanity " (p. 282).

Upon these Elder Brothers, Mr. Sinnett has an entire chapter, xi. p. 293. "Their accelerated evolution" implies "a short cut across the enormous spirals of the regular highway." "The hosts of the Dhyan Chohans" is the expression by which oriental philosophy endeavours to describe these sublime fruitions of the human race" (p. 308).

Earth-men are at their fourth stage: from Venus, eighteen million years ago, ants and bees, etc., came. Each cycle contains seven races, destined to evolve into man. In the lost continent of Lemuria lived our third race, where reason first dawned. It was here that mankind first split into its two sexes. Mr. W. Scott Elliot, in *The Lost Lemuria* (with two maps, T.P.S.), establishes, by the evidence of geology, of modern ethnology, and the data of observed evolution, the facts revealed in

H. P. B.'s *Secret Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup> In Atlantis, now sunk beneath the ocean, lived the fourth race. A certain amount of information is, we are told, to be gleaned concerning it, especially from Plato's *Critias*. Mr. Scott Elliot derides, however, the notion of trusting to mere geological or archæological records for our information. Clairvoyance has provided him with an immense amount of details as to the topography, fauna and flora, racial features, and civilization of Atlantis and the Atlanteans.<sup>2</sup> The first great catastrophe occurred 800,000 years ago; the second, 200,000; the last, 80,000. The final map was made 75,000 years ago, and was correct until the submersion of Poseidonis in 9564 B.C. The Atlanteans, therefore, were giants, also dwarfs; they were brown, red, yellow, white, or black. They had a high culture and prac-

<sup>1</sup> We may here say, once and for all, that we had, when starting this slightly lengthened version of the paper *Theosophy*, intended to illustrate it by constant references to *Isis Unveiled* and to the *Secret Doctrine*. To read those books (extremely entertaining though they be) requires a physical and mental effort which will leave the student but little energy for marking down the "mosaic of unacknowledged quotations" of which they confessedly exist; and none at all for supplying that measure of evaluation and comment which, after all, is but just if the ordinary reader is to judge of their character.

<sup>2</sup> *The Story of Atlantis*, 1909, four maps, T.P.S.

tised aviation. It is from them that we Aryans have inherited precious knowledge of the hidden virtues of gems, etc., and of chemistry, or rather of "alchemy, mineralogy, geology, physics, and astronomy" (H. P. B.) H. P. B. scoffs pitilessly at palæontologists who deny these things; H. S. O., in *Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science* (p. 72), at the "abysmal ignorance" of Western science, formed in the school of "Mill, Darwin, Tyndall, Hegel, and Burnouf."<sup>1</sup> However, the development of the fifth or Aryan race, to which we belong, began 100,000 years ago, and is now rushing down towards absolute evil. In fact, in Europe it is, from a religious, philosophic, and philanthropic point of view, in a *cul de sac*. But better things may be hoped for in America. Thence shall be prepared the sixth root-race of our cycle, and this, it has been shown, is due some 700 years hence. C. W. Leadbeater, indeed, knows its very diet—it will largely consist of a sort of blanc-mange, variously flavoured and coloured. Food will be partaken of in tea-

<sup>1</sup> Yet Mrs. Besant, *Introd.*, p. 16, finds the true successors of the sages (from whom Plato and Pythagoras drew) in Giordano Bruno, "the second Pythagoras"; in Fichte, Kant, and Schopenhauer; Emerson, Berkeley; Böhme, Fludd, and Swedenborg.

gardens; there are no chairs, but marbled hollows in the soil. The plates, too, are marble, and the whole is flooded after each repast<sup>1</sup> (*Man*, p. 427, T.P.S., 1913).

### (v.) MAN

Meanwhile Man, the Microcosm, is himself septuple, four parts composing the physical, three the spiritual, man. The following is H. P. B.'s chart (*Key*, p. 92):—

{ (a) <i>Rûpa</i> , or <i>Sthûla Sharîra</i> . (b) <i>Prâna</i> . (c) <i>Linga Sharîra</i> . (d) <i>Kama rûpa</i> .	(a) Physical body. (b) Life, or Vital Principle. (c) Astral body. (d) The seat of animal desires and passions.
{ 2. <i>Manas</i> —a dual principle in its functions.	2. Mind, intelligence, the higher human mind, whose light or radiation links the MONAD, for the lifetime, to the mortal man.
{ (f) <i>Buddhi</i> . (g) <i>Atma</i> .	(f) The Spiritual Soul. (g) Spirit.

The first four "principles" compose a man's Personality, the last three his Individuality. The *Atma*, H. P. B. says, is "one with the

<sup>1</sup> To the unchastened imagination this appears a depressing prospect: see, however, Zimmermann, *l.c.*, p. 393, n. 1; also A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism*, 1888, especially c. iv.; and M. Savnier, *Légende des symboles philosophiques, religieux, et maçonniques*, Paris, 1911.



Absolute"; Sinnett, that it is matter like the rest, only very subtle. Arnould (who describes all this, pp. 63-67) prudently exclaims, "*Quant au septième principe, Atmâ, n'en parlons pas.*" At death, the first four principles, or rather "states of consciousness," evanesce: the one *real* man, immortal in essence, if not in form, *Manas*, embodied consciousness (*Key*, p. 100), "God fallen into matter" (A. B., *Introd.*, p. 27), alone will subsist.

All human evolution is the effort of "this God" to reascend to its proper plane, taking with it (for by purification this is possible) as much of its personality as it can redeem. But since this ascent is impossible in the space of one "life," reincarnations are necessary, the *Manas* plunging into matter, God being manifest in flesh, only to return to the *Devachan* or heaven plane where, during a disincarnate existence of (on an average) 1500 years,<sup>1</sup> it assimilates experiences achieved, concludes thought-processes begun, gathers up into its *simple* self the results of its *double* selfhood when incarnate. The *Devachan* plane is happy,

<sup>1</sup> On this cf. *Key*, section ix., pp. 143-171; but also pp. 88-96, 123-137. R. Steiner, quoted by Zimmermann, p. 395, n. 1, says incarnation usually takes place twice in 2100 years, once in male, once in female form.

rich, and conscious, but is still the domain of illusion, and even this is not reached at once.

Mr. Leadbeater is able to give, both of the Astral and the Devachanic (or, as he prefers to call it, mental) planes, extremely accurate details, based on the comparative information of clairvoyants and on the higher teaching of Masters. Each is subjected to a septuple division.

The Astral plane, equivalent to Hades or Purgatory, is described in *The Astral Plane: its Scenery, Inhabitants, and Phenomena* (T.P.S., 1910), a difficult task, owing to the rapid and Protean changes undergone by all that exists there, to the difficulty of translating into physical-plane language such memories as may survive in a *revenant*, and, above all, to the fact that on the Astral plane everything is *seen* by a method different from that employed by earthly sight. Thus "an object is seen, as it were, from all sides at once, the inside of a solid being as plainly open to the view as the outside;<sup>1</sup> it is therefore obvious that an inexperienced visitor to this new world may well find considerable difficulty in understanding what he sees," etc. (p. 12). Its scenery has no

<sup>1</sup> At last we have found the source of the inspiration of the Futurists!

perspective; etheric particles and their currents are visible; also the human aura, which floats around us, slightly overlaps our outline, and takes on the colours proper to the emotions of the lower self. The auric egg is the real man, not the physical body which on this plane crystallizes in the middle of it (p. 21). The seventh level of this plane is quite black, shapeless, and affects the soul, which struggles in it, like a viscous fluid (p. 26). The crass sensualist or drunkard goes there after that passing into the next phase of life which we misleadingly call death (p. 42). On the sixth dwell the worldlings; on the third is found, apparently, the "summer land" of those who have selfishly lived in their imagination (p. 43). On the second highest is the selfish religionist, enjoying his gold crown and harp; on the first, the selfish devotee of intellectual pursuits. Connected with this is the whole theory of fairies, angels, ghosts, and even vampires and werewolves. Apparitions are often the *astral corpse* which the purified spirit has shelled off, and in process of corruption hangs round the physical corpse; it tries to obsess live persons, or even to keep blood, and therefore a fictitious life, in the corpse by sucking blood as a vampire, or

haunting butchers' shops and public-houses (p. 56, etc.). There is, finally, an eighth plane of unutterable horror, where the radically incurable life is disintegrated into its component parts (p. 59), which go to build up something better.

Mr Leadbeater's description of the *Devachanic Plane* or *Heaven World* (1902) is fuller.

Its lowest, seventh, sub-plane is peopled by persons in whom the family affection was highly developed. Thus his informant saw there a "small grocer of no intellectual development nor of any particular religious feeling" (p. 43). He spent his time there in an ideal back-parlour. "A striking characteristic of this sub-plane has been the very large number of Romans, Carthaginians, and Englishmen to be found there," but comparatively few Hindus and Buddhists. These are too religious, and live higher up. On the sixth sub-plane are those who exercised an anthropomorphic but not self-seeking religious devotion. They live in a "perpetual adoration of a personal deity" (p. 51). Here are Vishnu and Shiva worshippers, "each wrapped up in a cocoon of his own thoughts"; here the Irish peasant and the Madonna; the Spanish ecstatic nun and her Christ. The fifth sub-plane is

occupied by those whose devotion was expressed in outward work—even the true missionaries like Livingstone, who are no ignorant fanatics (p. 60). On the fourth are those whose “service was for the sake of service—the unselfish pursuers of spiritual, artistic, or philosophical knowledge.” This plane is crowded with Buddhists; but save for a few Sûfis and Gnostics, Mohammedanism and Christianity fail, on the whole, to carry souls as high as this, and when they do, it is due to characteristics not specifically theirs. Here are Mozart, Bach, etc.

After this, it is difficult to track the inhabitants of the remaining planes. Only the Masters and their initiated pupils inhabit the highest.

The Devachanic Ego, therefore, is the “ideal reflection” of the old best self. Thus had the grocer mentioned above been a devout *as well as* a good family man, he would have lived in an ideal dissenting chapel indeed, on the sixth plane, but surrounded by all the numerous progeny (idealized) he could have wished to have. In the Devachan plane the Ego has “*unalloyed* happiness, surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth.” Yet this

is but the supreme illusion, *Maya*, the "ideal efflorescence of all the abstract, therefore undying and eternal qualities—love and mercy, the love of the good, the true, the beautiful"—that it had absorbed by experience before death. And Devachan will last precisely so long as these garnered spiritual forces, now let loose, need to energize and express themselves (p. 73). Devachan is a *result*, not a *reward*. It, like Nirvâna itself (it would seem), may be renounced; but not by all; only, in fact, by those who, in ordinary earth-consciousness, have been able to realize, by tasting it, what they are renouncing, and do, in fact, so renounce, that they may stay below and instruct ignorant mankind (*v. supra*, p. 50).

Thus in this doctrine we see that Theosophists "reject absolutely" Paradise and Hell, or future rewards or punishments in the "orthodox" sense, and especially their "eternity." "Nothing that is finite can remain stationary"; and that which begins—in this case, our after-life—is necessarily finite; therefore it changes. Though the "personality" may perish, and the "soul" relapse, yet the Spirit—in man and in all else—is "Be-ness," one, eternal (*Key*, p. 109-116). We do not remember our previous

incarnations, for the Ego is furnished in each with a *new* body, brain, and memory—a “clean shirt” on which it were idle to look for blood-spots, though the murderer may wear it. “The spiritual Ego can act only where the personal Ego is paralysed”; only “in trance” can servant girls and farm hands “speak Hebrew and play the violin” (*ibid.*, pp. 127–142). No; after death, the “astral *eidolons*” of the lower Quaternity “await their *second death*” in *Kāma-loka*. The *Kāma-rūpa* phantom, thus bereft of the divine and thinking principles, unconscious, thoughtless, can be magnetized towards a “medium,” can actually take form within his aura (outside which it must dissolve and vanish, like jelly-fish outside water), can “live a kind of vicarious life, through the medium’s brain.” Hence not even the miscalled “spirits” that return prove “memory” in the departed. However, immediately after “death” the soul is “dazed” and possesses a “pre-Devachanic” consciousness. In this it can communicate with survivors (*Key*, p. 151).

We may here, at the risk of anticipating somewhat the considerations which will fall more strictly in place below, when we speak of Karma, insert a few principles bearing upon

this doctrine of reincarnation which is becoming, sporadically, so popular among us.

For this doctrine we have heard adduced, by way of argument, the supposed fact that we cannot otherwise account for the sudden likes and dislikes which rise in us on our first meeting with particular persons. We must have known them, and suffered good or evil at their hands, in some previous existence. Or we feel we *recognize* a place or a situation in which for the first time we find ourselves. Obviously we were in it, long ago, in another incarnation. Then, thus only are explained "unmerited" inequalities of birth. And so, too, are rendered tolerable the inexplicable vicissitudes of life. We are suffering for our ill actions done before this present birth; while, by virtuous actions now, we can ensure a happier incarnation hereafter. Finally, many religious systems have used reincarnation as an element in their creed.

Fr. Hull, in his *Theosophy and Christianity*, deals logically with this question, and clears the ground by generously conceding that *in itself* reincarnation is probably quite conceivable; its abstract possibility must be allowed, and whether it be a fact or no can only be decided by revelation for those who admit some such



authority. The portion of the human race which has believed in reincarnation is probably so far the smaller as in no sense to be equivalent to such authority; at the most, it suggests that the theory is not in itself uncontradictory. The fact that we have no "verifiable consciousness" of anything whatever to do with former lives is not in the least modified by the elusive and unimportant phenomena (likes and dislikes; the sense "I have been here before") noted above; while, *in practice*, if I can remember nothing of my previous incarnation, and do not even know who I was, I am *practically* a new person, and should not regard myself as fairly rewarded or punished for good and bad deeds for which I now feel myself to have been in no way responsible. I *may* have been Julius Cæsar, as Fr. Hull says; yet I should resent being punished for the murders and adulteries of which (history books tell me) Julius Cæsar was guilty. Even were I now to act in some discreditable way, and then, in consequence of an illness, or a blow on the head, etc., to lose all manner of memory of my past life, it would be morally unfair (though necessary, it may be, socially) to proceed punitively against me for what was done before the break in consciousness and in

(morally speaking) self-hood. Thus, if reincarnation should explain the divergent conditions of human birth, the fluctuations of life, it would only do so on the assumption that a purely *mechanical*, and in no sense a *moral* sequence existed in human history. Life would be under the dominion of fatality, not of justice. This brings us to the law of Karma.

#### (vi.) KARMA

And, in fact, the nature of each man's Devachan and, indeed, of the whole course of the after-life and each reincarnation, is rigorously determined for each by the law of *Karma*. This means, in brief, the absolutely determinist succession of cause and effect throughout the entire world-process and the whole history of man's soul. "The guilty must suffer," said Æschylus. And "as a man soweth, so shall he reap."

• It is the universal law of retributive justice ; it represents Ultimate Deity, and can, therefore, have neither wrath nor mercy, only absolute Equity, which leaves every cause, great or small, to work out its inevitable effects ; the *Ultimate Law* of the Universe. All great social evils, distinction of classes, and of the sexes, the unequal distribution of capital and

of labour—all are due to Karma. Hence a *national* or *social* Karma grows out of the aggregate of individual Karmas (*Key*, pp. 198–215).

In consequence, their Karma leaves no room for regret, hope, repentance, atonement, prayer.

It can neither be propitiated nor turned aside by prayer. “We do not believe in vicarious atonement, nor in the possibility of the remission of the smallest sin by any god. What we believe in is strict and impartial justice. [This is the sense in which Karma is “Relative and Distributive,” a law of readjustment giving back Harmony (which is synonymous with Good) to the world.] There is no repentance” (here we resume H. P. B.’s assertions in standard works): no “casting our sins at the foot of the Cross.” “There is no destiny but what we ourselves determine; no salvation or condemnation except what we ourselves bring about.” Weak natures may accept the “easy truth of vicarious atonement, intercession, forgiveness.” The Ego, then, becomes its own saviour in each world and incarnation (*Key*, p. 155). Christianity does but introduce one external, miraculous, and therefore unmoral Saviour.

Should this appear stern doctrine, we are reminded that Karma punishes for past sins in the next *incarnation* only (p. 161). After death, "only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its past incarnation," and for its good aspirations, is allotted to the soul. Thus Karma is "a child of the terrestrial Ego, the fruit of the actions of the tree which is the objective personality visible to all, . . . but also the tender mother, who heals the wounds inflicted by her during the preceding life, before she will begin to torture that Ego by inflicting on him new ones." A "gold thread" unites the pearls of action. At one moment, just before death, and before re-birth, comes one comprehensive flash of realization (p. 162).

We must here say that no greater mystery exists, in the human soul, than free-will, assuming that to be a fact. A philosopher who holds that the will is free is the first to admit that he has no human metaphor, and no language drawn from visible nature, in which to describe it accurately. All external nature with which we can deal acts by the laws of mechanics, and these are determinist. We take refuge in paradoxes such as, that the will is a "self-determining" faculty. As long as we

recognize this, we are honest, and no great harm is done. That we cannot properly explain in words that of which we have immediate vital consciousness does not matter much, as long as the consciousness remains.

Theosophists, however, in introducing the "law of Karma" as an *explanation* of the sequences of life, cannot but do so in mechanical terms which reduce the whole process to an absolutely necessary series. They are anxious, however, and rightly, to safeguard the human "freedom." Miss Edger (*op. cit.*, c. x.) denies indignantly that Karma means fatalism (p. 172): that we may say, "It is our Karma, it is useless to struggle"; or, "It is his Karma, therefore it is not for us to interfere"; or that Karma is "cold and unfeeling." We can, she says, *choose* to *alter* the necessary tendency of, *e.g.*, some ill action; and not, indeed, annul it, but, by a violent opposite effort, create a "resultant" of forces in an intermediate direction. But our very choice to make this opposite effort is as much dictated by Karma as was the original bad action, and all that happens is the necessary result of all that goes before. Nor can we say that the central "self" is free and independent and absolute, for there exists only *The Abso-*

lute, and that cannot change nor enter into relations with the changing. We do not say, therefore, that merit, punishment, and reward are lightly to be explained by the orthodox philosopher, or that he has any language or even thought in which to define that ultimate datum of consciousness—free-will. But postulating the latter, all the former are its logical sequels; Theosophy is right in denying the former, for the law of Karma, by which it professes to explain human choice in mechanical terms, annihilates the latter.

Hence prayer especially is idle.

"Do you ever pray?" the Theosophist is asked. "We do not, we *act*." "Pray?" (Buddhists would exclaim) "to whom? or to what?" (And yet they are confessedly far more virtuous than Christians.) To ask for help from Christ were "moral idleness, revolting, degrading to human dignity" (*Key*, pp. 66-72). It is absurd to suppose that an answer can be given to every foolish and egotistical prayer. Both Buddha and Christ corroborate this. Doubtless Jesus says: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name (that of "Christ"; H. P. B.), that will I do"; but this, interpreted esoterically, means Christ = *Buddhi-Manas* = SELF. The

only God we must recognize and pray to, or rather act in union with, is that Spirit of God of which our body is the temple (*ibid.*).

We see, then, what H. P. B. means when she says she believes in "will-prayer," an "internal command" to "our Father in heaven" in its esoteric meaning, *i.e.* in man himself, for man is "God," and not *a* God. The inner man is the only God we can have cognizance of . . . a deific essence. It does not listen to, nor is it distinct from, either finite man or the infinite essence—for all are one. Thus this *will-power* is a sheer force bringing about physical results, while all "petition prayer" kills self-reliance; the Jews invented it, the Pharisees perfected it (*ibid.*). It will be remembered that this doctrine is romantically put in Sir E. Arnold's *Light of Asia*, and more morosely in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Mrs. Besant characteristically softens this doctrine for English ears, though confessing that the advancing Theosophist passes naturally from petition to contemplation; angels or inferior powers may grant our baser requests: every heart-beat in man has its necessary repercussion in God; but the more perfectly spiritual the human effort, the deeper into the divine All does it reach, the

more immediately (in human or Christian language) into God's heart.<sup>1</sup>

We live, however, in a country, and we belong to a race, committed by every instinct in tradition to the notion of free-will; that man can modify by deliberate acts the cause and effect series of his life—that is, that he can lift himself above, or let himself sink below, the downward or upward tendency which (in mechanical logic) can alone result from that sum-total of his bad, or good, actions in the past, which is *Karma*. Mrs. Besant, characteristically once more, condescends to this, and in the lecture quoted above, actually finds room for the Christian dogma of Redemption, at least in the "Broad Church" sense, which is not the "juridical concept" of Anselm<sup>2</sup> (in which Christ is substituted for the sinner), still less the (falsely so-called) Early Christian notion (Christ is a

<sup>1</sup> The league of the *Golden Chain* for children of seven years and upwards, exhorts children on rising to recite and take as motto for the day the formula, "I am a link in the Golden Chain of Love, which extends over the whole world. (I will try to think, speak, and do, thoughts, words, and actions, clean and fair.) May every link in the Golden Chain be bright and strong." For children there are *First Steps in Theosophy* (by E. M. Mallet), *A Golden Afternoon*, *The Golden Stairs and Other Songs*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *L.H.R.*, *St. Augustine*, xx. p. 29.



ransom for man to Satan),<sup>1</sup> but an "at-one-ment" made between man and God in the revelation of Love shown in the person of Jesus. Frederick Denison Maurice, F. W. Robertson of Brighton, are here her patrons ; Mr. R. J. Campbell would have been, had she spoken in the days of the New Theology. Christ, we learn, has Divinity within Himself : so have we, but weakened, dormant. By contact with Him, it awakes, unites itself with Him ; our spirit becomes His—Him—that is, God. Thus His own prayer is accomplished, and we and He and the Father are one.<sup>2</sup>

But in general this question is linked up with the whole of Theosophic Ethic and Asceticism.

### (vii.) ETHIC.

This, naturally, may be *self-regarding* or *social*, and the latter aspect is emphasized in Theosophy, where in a physical sense one life circulates through the whole universe ; nay, our universal brotherhood is not still to be achieved, nor perfected, still less is a metaphor, but is a substantial fact. Directly the fleeting elements of the lower man are recognized as such, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *L.H.R.*, *St. Augustine*, xx. p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> This version is a frank concession to English prejudice. Cf. *infra*, pp. 101, n. 1 ; 112 ; and *supra*, pp. 46, n. 1 ; 62.

when he sees that the body is but a "sheath" to the "inner, truer man," the true Theosophist will not macerate, cut, or burn the body, but "de-animalize" it by abstinence as far as possible from food, at any rate from meat. But there are no "hard-and-fast obligations"; even wine and spirits—"only less destructive than the habitual use of hashish, opium, and other drugs"—are not absolutely forbidden. Similarly marriage will, by those who aim at the highest goal, be abandoned, for the plain reason that "no man can serve two masters"; it is impossible for him to "divide his attention between the pursuit of occultism and a wife" (*Key*, pp. 258, 263).

Needless to say, this is but "exoteric" reasoning. The Enlightened see that but one Soul exists in the evolving All, and will not dream of sacrificing the life of the meanest of their brethren, beast or fowl or fish.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anna Kingsford writes, *The Perfect Way in Diet*; Mrs. Besant, *Against Vivisection, The Influence of Alcohol*; H. Reinheimer, *Nutrition and Evolution*; nor is Mr. Eustace Miles's name absent. The *Yoga* discipline (the lower *nathayoga*, and the royal *râjayoga*) educates a man to that full detachment which takes him quicker out of the wheel of re-births. Special attitudes of neck and back, that the vital currents may circulate properly, are advised; concentration of the thought upon the solar plexus, or on a pleasing and

But the essence of Theosophic ethic is Altruism, though in a sense this is a misnomer, since ultimately we all are One. The only evil is Individualism; the supreme good, all that makes for Unity. Really, "I am you, and you I" (Arnould, p. 39); we are distinguished only as drops in the ocean, as a ray broken in a prism. Hence, tolerance, sympathy, forgiveness, social effort are essentials to the Theosophic life; hence the supreme sacrifice of those made perfect, who put off their reward for the sake of suffering, backward humanity (see *Key*, pp. 263-271); freedom and unselfishness are the ideal of education.

simple form such as a lotus or tulip; regular in- and out-breathings (E. A. Fletcher writes: *The Law of the Rhythmic Breath*); the solemn pronunciation of the mystic syllable ÔM—all this makes for progressive spiritualization, till a man becomes a disciple (*chela*), fit for the special attention of a Master (*gurû*). See A. Besant, *The Self and its Sheath, The Path of Discipleship, In the Outer Court*. I translate the following prayer inserted in the October number of the German *Theosophie*, Leipzig, 1910, at p. 290. (At each inspiration the *first* verse is meditated; at the expiration, the second):

"I breathe the breath of Life: I send love to all mankind. I breathe the life-dispensing ether: I send forth thoughts of life for all mankind. I breathe the eternal movement of the divine life: I send wishes for health for all mankind. I breathe the universal Life Spirit, full of strength: And deny all weakness of Life and of the soul." And so on, ending, for *Amen*, "So breathes every man that is born of God."

It is in this way alone that we ultimately achieve Nirvâna. As the Theosophist treatment of this notion adds nothing to that of the Buddhists, and detracts in no way from its inherent difficulties, we are content to refer the reader to the passages dealing with it in the C.T.S. *Lectures on the History of Religions* (especially Nos. iv. and xxxiv.). We must, in loyalty, remind ourselves that any interpretation of Nirvâna which makes of it total *annihilation* is repudiated by Theosophists.

In it, "that which drew from out the boundless Deep turns again Home." And, "from the great Deep to the great Deep he goes." The innermost self returns to that ultimate Self of all things from which it seemed, during these cycles of varying consciousness, to be separated.

It is true that no one has ever stated a solution, or indeed conceived one, of the ultimate mysteries of the "One and the many"; of the Immutable and the changing; of the Real and the "seeming" or illusory; of the Absolute and the dependent.

We shall say that Christian philosophy and dogma claim to state, and to safeguard, but not explain, two sets of simultaneously true and necessary facts—that man depends for his whole

existence upon God, yet that for all eternity he shall exist as an individual being, other than God; that God is absolute in the order of morality no less than in that of reality, yet that man has the freedom to resist and separate himself from Him if he so choose. Theosophy, while endeavouring to synthesize these facts, sacrifices one or the other of the two groups.

Catholic ethic claims to achieve the maximum (because supernatural) degree of self-realization by way of a carefully guarded method of self-denial, and of social and fraternal self-forgetfulness. This doctrine is based on no "Manichean" belief that the individual, the body, or matter generally are bad; nor on pantheistic or monistic beliefs in the ultimate identity of all men; but on the fact of sinfulness, at the one extreme, and of the redemption of the human individual and race, in which man's free effort co-operates with God's free grace.

Looking at the matter broadly and objectively, we are safe in saying that Theosophy does not appear to be justified in any claim that it is equal even to the most volatilized form of Christianity. We say "even," because the Theosophist considers that to be higher than the

Christianity which includes creed and code, historical fact and theological formula.

Theosophy, in its "ethical entourage," as Fr. Hull calls it (part i. p. 5), "is a selection out of the noblest and best growths of the human spirit. But . . . the Christian ideal already comprises this selection, and has, in fact, originated the spirit which Theosophy aims at making its own. In short, Theosophy, regarded ethically, is a reflection of Christianity in its purest ground principles; and thus viewed, is not antagonistic to Christianity nor yet an improvement on it. We maintain, in consequence, that no one already a Christian need feel the least difficulty in claiming for himself as a Christian all that Theosophy holds out to him; since he inherits by his Christian birthright all that is good in Theosophy, and need not seek outside his own religion what is already there."

That Christian morality, taken in a wide view, "works," no one save the upholders of an anti-Christian thesis disputes. Whether Theosophist morality, as expressed in the general history of the T.S., does so, may be doubted. After all, Theosophists are relatively few, and should be in their first fervour. Unluckily, neither their earliest leaders, nor the generation

immediately subsequent upon them, nor the organic history of the Society, nor its quite recent "conversation" in India, America, and England, make for edification. But when all, Christian and Theosophist, have the duty of smiting, often enough, their breast, yet it must be recalled that the supreme doctrines of each religion hold, on the Christian side, an ethical stimulus, while, on the Theosophist, they do not. Thus the "personal and moral" relations into which the Christian can enter with his One Supreme, the knowledge that he is right in considering God to be in no merely metaphorical sense his Father, the conviction that he already is in a "moral" sense divine by the communication of grace, and that his is a destiny of personal consciousness in the beatific union with the Godhead, form a stimulus which outstrips all that a philosophy of emanation and reabsorption and personal annihilation can supply. That an identical spark of divinity, a single logos, dwells in each of us is, whether it be considered to convey any particular meaning or no, a far inferior moral force than the group of beliefs connected with the real incarnation of the Son of God and our redeemed brotherhood in him.

In fine, in the whole Theosophist doctrine of esotericism, identical with the old Gnosticism, is a germ of spiritual contempt and aloofness, and, in short, of Pharisaism, which is fatal to that humility which is at the root of genuine brotherhood.



### III

## THEOSOPHY AND THE RELIGIONS

### (i.) BUDDHISM AND SPIRITUALISM

WE have seen (p. 47) that Theosophy offers itself, not as a new religion, but as that supremely ancient, profound, and universal knowledge which is at the root of all religions. Its "colour" is, however, so strongly Oriental, that it has constantly been confused with *Buddhism*. Against this it protests. "Buddhism," says A. A. (p. 5), "is but one of many 'symbol religions' which divide the world between them." Theosophists are no more *Buddhists* "than all musicians are followers of Wagner" (*Key*, p. 12). But Theosophists may be called *Buddhists*—Wisdomists—since Buddha, like Christ, taught an esoteric doctrine, which they hold. Even the "dead letter" of Southern Buddhism is, however, far grander and more noble, philosophical, and scientific, than that of any other Church or religion (*ibid.*, pp. 12-15).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But, with that adaptability which has marked the T.S. since the advent of Mrs. Besant, in Ceylon, for instance,

Still less is Theosophy sheer spiritism, though "spiritualist phenomena, being indubitable and

Theosophy is profoundly Buddhized. Cf. her *Buddhist Popular Lectures*, delivered there in 1907. In Ceylon Buddhist propaganda has been remarkable. In 1845 Buddhism had not a single school there. But Col. Olcott (who, by the way, in a previous incarnation was King Asoka, cf. *L.H.R.*, iv. p. 24), preached temperance there, decrying Catholic schools, persuading the natives to give money they saved on drink to Buddhist schools. Of these in 1910 there were 445, of which 206 were Theosophical. There were 436 Catholic schools, and 891 Protestant, apportioned between eight sects. Col. Olcott's campaign is criticized in C. F. Gordon Cumming's *Two Happy Years in Ceylon*, ii. pp. 413-419. In India, however, the "colour" is Brahmanic. With Mrs. Besant's help the Central Hindu College at Benares was founded (cf. the lectures given there, *Hindu Ideals*). It imparts a complete modern and English education (intellectual and physical), often under English certificated masters and mistresses. But the religion and philosophy is pure Brahminism. Powerfully supported, widely imitated, its resistance to Christianity is not only negative. Mrs. Besant, alarmed at Brahmin conversions at St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, was making a tour in the south. "She was received at Madras like a goddess; the prime minister of the Rajah of Mysore had prostrated himself before her as before the incarnation of the goddess Sarasvati, the goddess of science, wife of Brahma. At Trichinopoly a crowd of Hindu devotees awaited her at the station. She was escorted to the National High School, opposite the enemy's citadel, St. Joseph's College. She delivered lecture upon lecture. On her return home, she continued her pamphlet-campaign. She explained conversions by the basest motives, called Jesus Christ an incarnation of Vishnu, and, in general, fought explicitly and with energy the growing influence of the missionaries." (A. Brou, *Bulletin des Missions : Études*, cxxiv., 1901, pp. 261-265.)

scientifically verified (when not just simulated by charlatans), must be reduced to one of the inferior sections of Occult Science" (A. A., *ibid.*). Occult sciences, H. P. B. insists, do exist, and are most dangerous (*Key*, p. 26); the reason being, that persons possessed of a *certain amount* of control over higher forces use these awry, because for selfish ends. Spiritist phenomena, but not the spiritist explanations, can be accepted: their theories are "crude," their "bigotry is blind" (*ibid.*, pp. 25-32); in fact, H. P. B. violently attacks the "hatred" of the Spiritualists, and the "famous and infamous attack on the T.S. by the S.P.R." (p. 273). "Every kind of slander, uncharitable personal remarks, and absurd misrepresentations," express their "violent hatred," in America, then England, then France (pp. 274, 276).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yet Theosophy seems inevitably to be linked with the lower forms of Occultism. Cf. *Occult Chemistry*, by A. B. and C. W. Leadbeater; *Thought Forms* (with coloured pictures of forms clairvoyantly seen and "vibratory" figures), by the same; J. Bertrand, *Occultisme Ancien et Moderne*, Bloud, 1900; and the extremely rich documentation of *L'Occultisme Contemporain*, C. Godard, *ibid.* "Alan Leo" writes *Astrology for All*, *How to Judge a Nativity*, *The Horoscope in Detail*, etc., etc., and offers "to supply horoscopes from five shillings to ten guineas." The Kabbalah is an inexhaustible topic for Theosophist writers, and there is confusion of judgement implied by the trash that figures,

## (ii.) THEOSOPHIST MIRACLES

Here we should perhaps insert a brief note on the marvels of Theosophy. The facts are disputed, and we do not pretend to decide on the character, or even the reality, of the phenomena. Fr. Richard Clarke<sup>1</sup> concedes to them a considerable measure of objectivity. Mrs. Besant, indeed, became a Theosophist largely on their occasion.<sup>2</sup> H. S. O. broke with the mediums because he saw their phenomena equalled and surpassed, at will, and in broad daylight, by H. P. B. and Eastern adepts.

“He who has mastered the occult sciences finds, dwelling in fire, air, earth, and water, a sub-human order of beings, some inimical, some favourable to man. He not only comes to a knowledge of them, but also to the power of controlling them. . . . I do not surmise this; I *know* it. I speak thus certainly and boldly about the subject, because I have met these proficientes of Asiatic Occultism and seen them exercise their power. This is why I ceased to in their bulletins and advertisements, alongside of works under distinguished names — Edwin Arnold, A. Lang, F. W. H. Myers, William James. W. E. Waite is one of the most prolific writers in this department.

<sup>1</sup> *Month*, 1892, Feb., pp. 173, 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Why I became a Theosophist*, pp. 20-21, etc.

call myself a Spiritualist in 1874, and why, in 1875, I united with others to found a Theosophical Society, to promote the study of these natural phenomena. The most wonderful facts of mediumship [and Col. Olcott had quoted a rather astonishing collection, including about five hundred "materialized" *revenants* from "beyond"] I have seen produced at will, and in full daylight, by one who had learnt the secret sciences in India and Egypt. Under such circumstances, I have seen showers of roses made to fall in a room; letters from people in far countries to drop from space into my lap; heard sweet music, coming from afar upon the air, grow louder and louder until it was in the room, and then die away again, out in the still atmosphere, until it was no more. I have seen writing made to appear upon paper and slates laid upon the floor, drawings upon the ceiling beyond anyone's reach, pictures upon paper without the employment of pencil or colour, articles duplicated before my very eyes, a living person disappear out of my sight, jet black hair cut from a fair-haired person's head. I have had absent friends and distant scenes shown me in a crystal; and in America, more than a hundred times, upon opening letters upon

various subjects coming to me by the ordinary post, from correspondents in all parts of the world, have found inside, written in their own familiar hand, messages to me from men in India who possess the Theosophical knowledge of natural law.”<sup>1</sup>

We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that the “marvels” have been ever less emphasized: that they are not the *essentials* of Theosophy has always been conceded. The writings of H. P. B. are, in Mrs. Besant’s eyes, the most marvellous of the “phenomena”; or the conversion of A. P. Sinnett. To others, it is Mrs. Besant’s own conversion that is the miracle *par excellence*. But we must be allowed to refer to the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (vol. iii., parts viii., ix., 1885, pp. 201–400) for the famous dispute upon the alleged deceits, forgeries, and trickeries of Mme. Blavatsky, which, it has been argued, descended to a very low level of imposture.

We spoke above of the Coulomb scandal, and of the Report of the Society for Psychical Research. Of course, the T.S., though ap-

<sup>1</sup> Col. Olcott, *Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science*, p. 251.

parently destined to "be slain by the blow,"<sup>1</sup> faced the inquisition boldly. Counter-accusations were made: Mr. Hodgson is described as "befooled to the top of his bent"; his report is "ignorant, malicious, dishonest, hasty, and slipshod." "The Son of Man," quotes A. B., applying this to H. P. B. and Mr. Hodgson, "indeed goeth as it hath been written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed." Similarly, Mme. Coulomb is described again and again as a "superstitious Christian," and engaged in a "plot" with the missionaries.

Moreover, all the letters purporting to be from H. P. B. which Mme. Coulomb produced were said to be mere forgeries. We quote three of them, respecting their English, French, punctuation, etc., and expressing no comment. They are to be found with many others in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (vol. iii., parts viii., ix., 1885, pp. 201-400), which contains two plates of H. P. B.'s handwriting and a plan of the miraculous shrine. (H. P. B. boldly showed this report to A. B. before her conversion.)

<sup>1</sup> A. B., *H. P. B. and the Masters*, p. 53.

H. P. B. to Mme. Coulomb, October 1883  
(p. 211):—

Now, dear, let us change the programme. Whether *something* succeeds or not, I must try. Jacob Sassoon, the happy proprietor of a crore of rupees, is anxious to become a Theosophist. He is ready to give 10,000 rupees to buy and repair the headquarters; he said to Colonel (Ezekiel, his cousin, arranged all this), if only he saw a little phenomenon, got the assurance that the *Mahâtmas* could hear what was said, or give him some *other sign of their existence* (? !). Well, this letter will reach you the 26th, Friday; will you go up to the Shrine and ask K. H. [Koot Hoomi; the name of H. P. B.'s "Master"] to send me a telegram that would reach me about 4 or 5 in the afternoon same day, worded thus:—

"Your conversation with Mr. Jacob Sassoon reached Master just now. Were the latter even to satisfy him, still the doubter would hardly find the moral courage to connect himself with the Society.—  
RAMALINGA DEB."

If this reaches me on the 26th, even in the evening, it will still produce a tremendous impression. Address, care of N. Khandallavalla, Judge, Poona. *Je ferai le reste. Cela coutera quatre ou cinq roupies. Cela ne fait rien.*—Yours truly, (Signed) H. P. B.

Page 212:—

Le général part pour affaires à Madras . . . et veut voir le *shrine* . . . il est qu'il s'attend à un phénomène car il me l'a dit . . . suppliez K. H. . . de soutenir



l'honneur de famille . . . Damn les autres. Celui-là vaut son pesant d'or. Per l'amor del Dio ou de qui vous voudrez *ne manquez pas cette occasion* car elle ne se répétera plus . . . à vous de cœur.—LUNA MELANCOLICA.

Page 214 :—

Ma chère Amie,—Je n'ai pas une minute pour répondre. Je vous supplie faites parvenir cette lettre (here inclosed) à Damodar *in a miraculous way*. It is very, *very* important. Oh, ma chère que je suis donc malheureuse ! De tous côtés des désagréments et des horreurs. Toute à vous.—H. P. B.

“On the face of them . . . [A. B. declares, *l.c.*], to anyone acquainted with Mme. Blavatsky, the letters are forgeries, for they are the letters of an uneducated woman, whereas the style of Mme. Blavatsky was brilliant, however familiar and conversational.”

On p. 37 she adds, “Mme. Blavatsky herself met the foul accusation with characteristic indignation and warmth of language.” Her undisputedly authentic words run thus :

“I swear by the Master whom I serve faithfully, and for the sake of carrying whose orders I suffer now, let Him curse me in the future birth, aye, in a dozen of births, if I have ever done anything on my own hook, if I have ever written one line of these

infernal letters. And if the only person I believe implicitly on earth—MASTER—came and told me I had, then I would lay it at his door; for nothing and no one in this world could have taken away the recollection of that deed—that idiotic and insane deed—from my brain and memory but Himself—so you had better shut up and ask *Him*. The idea of it! Had I been such an ass, . . .” etc.

H. S. O. prevented Mme. Blavatsky from prosecuting for libel the *Christian College Magazine*, Madras, which had published the letters, just as she was stopped from prosecuting Hodgson when he called her a Russian spy.

Catholic history and hagiography contain many incidents, similar sometimes in kind (levitation, clairvoyance, apparitions), to those claimed by Theosophists. It will be observed, however, that they are ethical in significance or occasion. Their amount of fact-value is an affair of evidence. They are considered, when called “miraculous,” to be a divine intervention in (not contradiction of) the normal interplay of those laws of which we are con-naturally conscious. In ecclesiastical history, no remarkable occurrence, taken as such individually, imposes itself on the believer, as a miracle. He must believe that miracles can happen, have happened, and can be recog-

nized. Wonders connected, even indirectly, with truths of faith have a special claim on his respect.

### (iii.) CHRISTIANITY

Mme. Blavatsky, we saw, speaks roughly of Christianity. Col. Olcott speaks of it as morally corrupt and spiritually paralysed. M. Arnould considers it to have narrowed and materialized Buddhism (p. 20).<sup>1</sup> Any favour

<sup>1</sup> To make up, H. P. B. in her Glossary proves the reality of the miracles of Apollonius of Tyana by a passage from St. Justin. But not only is the passage *falsely attributed* to Justin (Otto, *Opera Iustini*, iii. 2), but even in its setting it is an *objection*, which the supposed Justin refutes! Mrs. Besant reproduces it as decisive in *Theosophy and its Evidences*, p. 16. Since Apollonius of Tyana (*cf. L.H.R.*, xiv. p. 21) is so often mentioned by modern Theosophists as a Master equally with Christ, we may mention that he died very old, towards the end of the first century of our era, but the first written life we have of him is by Philostratus, not before 200 A.D. It is based on hearsay or untrustworthy documents, is highly rhetorical, and wholly unscientific. Little can be deduced with certainty from it. Mr. G. R. S. Mead is a prolific and popular writer upon the early semi-Christian movements, some of which we mention in Appendices. *Cf.* his *Apollonius of Tyana* (T.P.S., 1901), *Plotinus, Thrice-Greatest Hermes* (Hellenistic Gnosis), *Echoes from the Gnosis, The World Mystery*. Philostratus (whom Kayser calls a "Parisian feuilletoniste") causes to J. Réville (*Relig. à Rome s. l. Sévères*, 1886, ii. p. 225) a "genuine exaspera-

shown to Christianity is based on its *esoteric doctrine*, of which creed and cult are mere symbols. We have seen Mrs. Besant trace the Trinity and Redemption in Theosophy (pp. 65, 92). Christ, too, she will honour, because "in all the religions of the world" the Second Person of that Trinity incarnates Himself and reveals Himself as man. Thus she will argue that if by "Christ" you mean a Divine Man, then He is not unique (for, are we not all Christs, more or less?); if you mean the Second Logos, ah, then, adore Him with all your soul, but remember, your worship reaches Him whom the Hindu names, and rightly, *Vishnu*. And thus Theosophy "widens our horizons," and offers us other Great Masters than the One believed in, and we see written an *Imitation of Buddha*, and of *Krishna*. Only the name varies—Mithra, Krishna, Bacchus, Osiris,

tion" as he reads those pages "d'une nullité et d'une platitude désolantes." Not that Apollonius is wholly despicable by any means. But to offer him as a choice specimen of any system is suicidal. However, it is satisfactory to be able henceforward to refer to Prof. J. S. Phillimore's very complete, critical, and brilliant book *Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana*, Oxford, 1912. Mr. Mead's book is well written and careful; his *Orpheus* (T.P.S., 1896) is another attempted reconstruction of a system concerning which the most divergent conclusions will be reached.

Christ; the divine story is the same in all religions.

In her *Esoteric Christianity* (T.P.S., 1901) Mrs. Besant develops her views at great length. Looking abroad, she says, over the religious area, extraordinary similarities are indisputably visible everywhere in myth, ritual, and ethical ideal. Hence "Comparative Mythologists" deduce that "religions are branches from a common trunk—human ignorance"; but "Comparative Religionists" (p. 9) that they are "branches from a common trunk—Divine Wisdom." This Divine Wisdom, fully possessed by the teachers, is doled out by them through different channels, in such ways as each age can receive it. They have normally been extremely reluctant to do this, lest swine should trample their pearls (p. 19). That to-day they should have been so far generous in communicating their knowledge is a startling fact, and means that our race is at a crisis.<sup>1</sup> Hence all religions had, and must have had, an esoteric side, composed of mysteries — facts, that is, and interpretations of facts—not communicated to the multi-

<sup>1</sup> A. P. Sinnett insists strongly on this unique modern tendency to "reveal" mysteries sealed up from before all ages, in *Esoteric Buddhism*, 1888, pp. xvii.-xix.

tude. Traces of this are found, she argues, even in the Gospels and Epistles — Christ taught through parables explained only to the Apostles (Mark iv. 10; 34, etc.); He has much to say which the Apostles “cannot bear now” (John xvi. 12); pearls are not for swine (Matt. vii. 6); nor bread for dogs (Mark vii. 27). “Words of Initiation” are common: the Saved, Eternal Life, Little Child, Strait Gate, Narrow Path; above all, Second Birth. Paul, the great Initiate, is constantly telling his converts that he but feeds them on milk, not on strong meat of doctrine; above all, he emphasizes his special possession of a “mystery” (*cf.* Col. i. 23, iv. 3; Eph. iii. 3, 4, 9), and speaks of “Christ being formed in” Christians. And various Christian fathers, especially Clement of Alexandria and Origen, she quotes to the same effect.

Relying very largely on the *Pistis Sophia* of Valentinus (*infra*, p. 138), but also (p. 120) on occultist sources such as clairvoyance, she perceives that there exist the *historical* Christ (c. iv.), the *mythical* Christ (c. v.), and the *mystical* Christ (c. vi.). H. P. B. also knows that the Roman Church considers Christ as the Gnostics did, namely, as the chief of the

Æons. As a rule, however, she cannot bear anything Roman Catholic, or indeed anything, however remotely, ecclesiastical. Above all, she hates Eusebius ; he is the "most unmitigated falsifier that has ever existed in any age." Cf. Glossary to *Key*, "Origen." As for the Jesuits, they "tell us that 2 and 2 are not always 4, since it depends on the will of God to make  $2 \times 2 = 5$ " (*ibid.*, p. 62). Since there is no trace of H. P. B.'s having studied Jesuit sources, we cannot but fear this is "occult" knowledge, revealed not even to the luckless Jesuits themselves. A. B. also has her *petit mot pour rire*. The *Theosophist* for January 1913 contains her editorial notes, called "On the Watch Tower." On p. 481 she writes : "The T.S. is face to face with an organized attack, engineered by the most dangerous enemy that liberty of thought and speech have ever had—the Jesuits. H. P. B. long ago warned us that this conflict would come, and now it is upon us. They work in different lands in different disguises, but aim steadily at one thing—the destruction or distortion of Theosophy. In America, they started a secret organization, called the Universal Brotherhood (not openly identical with Mrs. Tingley's U.B.), and within this the

‘Besant Union,’ and cleverly induced Theosophists to think that they were working in my interests. Their chief tool has now joined the Roman Catholic Church. In Germany they are working to secure the predominance of Christianity in the T.S., thus distorting it into a Christianizing sect, and making certain its rejection in the East. Money is poured out like water ; one day’s post brings attacks from Rome, from Stockholm, from Hong Kong. It is very interesting to watch, and one recalls the words of warning that ‘the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’”

Since the Masters confessedly convey their doctrine in a shell of myth, we are in no way obliged to fear that Mrs. Besant may believe all this. But even the Protestant Alliance could scarcely improve upon it.

The *historical* Jesus, A. B. writes, born 105 “B.C.”<sup>1</sup> was taught the Hebrew Scriptures by his parents, became an Essene monk at twelve, entered at nineteen the monastery of Mount Serbal, where he found a superb library of occultist books, many of them from Trans-Himalayan India. He next retires to Egypt,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. R. S. Mead, *Did Jesus live 100 B.C.?*



enters the esoteric "lodge" which gives to all great religions their founder. At twenty-nine he is fit to receive, and become instrument of, a powerful Son of God, a Buddha of Compassion. To Him he surrenders his body. The Being enters at the moment of the "baptism," the "temptation" being the summarized arguments of the Essenes "against his proposed life of loving labour" (p. 135). In the form of the man Jesus, this Being moves about, preaches, cures, is rejected. The human body suffers the penalty for its services rendered to its super-human occupant. For more than fifty years, in his astral body, he visits his disciples, and instructs them in esoteric lore. About 35 B.C. they sally forth to preach. In this way it is hoped that the historical reality of Jesus will be saved from the confusions of the Gospels, and his spiritual grandeur made only the more evident. Myth crystallizes round the historic nucleus. Jesus is virgin-born; crucified; ascends; and the *mythic* Christ affords an occasion for interconnecting all known myths, and the husk of legend is shown to be everywhere identical and unhistorical. It is the exoteric tradition. The *mystic* Christ, whose "atonement" (= at-one-ment; *cf. supra*, p. 93),

is the subject of c. vii., is, as we saw, the Logos, descended into, clothed in, and extended throughout [= crucified upon : limited to] matter, and, equally, the Divine spark in Man.

There are those who feel the need, not only of discovering evidence for an esoteric Christianity, but of dealing with what is usually considered evidence for the ordinary beliefs of Christians. Mr. Kingsland, in the *Esoteric Basis of Christianity* (T.P.S.), prepares the way by laying down that "literary, historical, and scientific criticism has destroyed in the minds of thousands all belief in the validity of the Bible in its mere historical form ; and the Church, having nothing to disclose beyond the historical form, is unable to retain those who might otherwise look to her for guidance" (Pref., i.).<sup>1</sup> Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, in his *Christian Creed* (T.P.S., 1904), explains the gradual growth of ecclesiastical orthodoxy

<sup>1</sup> This wholesale appropriation of the views of extreme critics is characteristic of the writers of this school when they want to discredit ordinary Christianity. It will be remembered that Theosophy flourished first just when it was the fashion in England to accept such "results" blindly ; already the substructure of this Theosophist argument is crumbling. But these writers own with readiness that the *Church* does not now possess any esoteric doctrine, and has long lost it. The whole question is, whether the Church ever possessed one, and whether now an esoteric Christianity is legitimately to be held by anyone.

as expressed in the three creeds. Their "inner sense," their "real meaning and origin," he gets, "not from the comparison of ancient MSS., nor from the study of the voluminous works of theological writers," but it is "simply the result of an investigation into the records of Nature made by a few students of Occultism" (p. 3).

The sources of our creeds are, he perceives, triple (p. 12) : (*a*) an ancient formula of "cosmogensis" ; (*b*) the rubric for the guidance of the hierophant in the Egyptian form of the Sohan or Sotâpatti initiation ; (*c*) the materializing tendency which mistakenly sought to interpret (*a*) and (*b*) as relating the biography of an individual. At Nicea, and in the Nicene Creed (p. 29), "even already the fatal identification of the Christ with Jesus, and of both of them with the Second Logos, shows itself all too plainly . . . still, it will be noticed that the confusion of the conception by the Holy Ghost and the birth from the Virgin does not appear ; the symbol of the Crucifixion is not degraded into a historical fact. . . ."

Are we tempted to ask whether the title "Jesus Christ" does not mark a fairly definite and ancient identification, and if "under Pontius

Pilate " is not a rigidly historical datum, we are answered: They are forgeries (or errors, or, anyhow, late readings). "In the earliest copies written in Greek (p. 68) which have as yet been *clairvoyantly seen* by *our investigators* [italics ours] the words now rendered as ΙΗΣΟΥΝΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ and translated Jesus 'Christ' appear either as ΙΗΤΡΟΝΑΠΙΣΤΟΝ, which would mean 'the chiefest healer' (or deliverer), or as ΙΕΡΟΝΑΠΙΣΤΟΝ, which seems to mean simply 'the most holy one.' It is, however, of little use for us to speak of these various readings until some explorer on the physical plane discovers a manuscript containing them, for then only will the world of scholars be disposed to listen to the suggestions which naturally follow from them" (p. 68). Quite so. Nothing discouraged, Mr. Leadbeater's clairvoyants have found out that ΠΟΝΤΙΟΥ ΠΙΛΑΤΟΥ (Pontius Pilate) ought to read ΠΟΝΤΟΥΠΛΗΓΟΥ, which "is said" to mean (p. 80) "compressed or dense sea." "He endured the dense sea," the creed's article now runs. "He allowed himself to be limited by, imprisoned in, astral matter." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the same source he learns that the Athanasian Creed was written, all by one hand, long before 800 at the

Thus esoterically interpreted, the creeds can be rehearsed without intellectual or spiritual degradation. Similarly, confess—above all, communicate—Mrs. Besant tells the Catholic “disciple.” “Hear Mass,” says A. L. B. Hardcastle (*Rev. Theos.*, September 1904, pp. 199–205), and explains the “real” meaning of its ritual.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, a “Guild of the Mysteries of God” has been founded, under the auspices of the T.S., by the Rev. C. W. Scott Moncrieff and the Rev. F. W. Pigott. It is meant to gather together and organize Christians consecrated to “live, study, pray, and work” in the hope of the restoration of the lost mysteries (*Theosophist*, October 1912, p. 138). This is connected

monastery of Lerins. We wish he would learn, from that or any other source, what “Immaculate Conception” means. It does not mean Virgin Birth, for instance (p. 76).

<sup>1</sup> Only we wish he could get it right. The altar-candles are not lighted after the priest has read, on his knees, a secret confession. We do not, by blessing salt and water and incense, attribute to them “a sort of conscious life”: the “solid marble or wrought metal of the altar-rails” is not a “diamond barrier” between exoterist and esoterist. Christ is said to leave His “Nirvânic consciousness” for the prison of the ciborium; so too Mr. Currie (*Theos. Rev.*, Aug. 1904) can explain the esoteric *Pater Noster*. Cf., too, R. Steiner, *Le mystère chrétien et les mystères antiques*, tr. Schuré, Paris, 1908.

with a definite expectation of the speedy "return" of "Christ." To prepare for this great teacher's advent, the Order of the Star in the East has been founded, with a free reading-room in New Oxford Street, and publishes a monthly, *The Star in the East*.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church tells its members that there has never been an *esoteric Christianity*, in the sense that she possesses a set of doctrines or practices which are communicated only to an elect few. The simplest Christian has always had the right to Christ's full doctrine. "I have always spoken openly to the world: I always taught in the synagogue where all the Jews come together, and in secret I spoke nothing." There is, of course, the complementary fact that the Church has also insisted that there is no limit to the ever profounder understanding, "realization," and appropriation of her great mysteries. These mysteries, we repeat, are not secret doctrines,<sup>2</sup> but profound and mysterious

<sup>1</sup> Is not this recurrent misnomer a curious phenomenon? Even if the text is not to be translated, "We have seen his star at its rising," yet it can only mean, "We, being in the East, have seen his star." There is no mention of a star which was in the East. Had it been there, the Magi would have gone to India, not to Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> Scholars recognize that even the Pagan "mysteries" (cf. *L.H.R.*, xi., *Ancient Greece*, pp. 21-24; xiv., *Imperial*

doctrines, which can but gradually be assimilated. Yet St. Paul did not hesitate to preach quite the most profound of them to his converts, even while he told them they could not fully grasp his meaning (1 Cor. iii. 1-3). This doctrine, which he calls *his* gospel, the Great Mystery, is undoubtedly the extension of Christ's salvation to Gentile as well as to Jew, and the opening to all of that "recapitulation into Christ," that substantial union with Him, that "forming of Christ" and indwelling of the Divine Spirit within the soul, in which Theosophists are fully right in recognizing a, and in fact *the*, supremely important element in Christianity, and in the doctrine of Paul and John in particular.<sup>1</sup> Only they do not interpret Paul's words as Paul would. Similarly, the history of the Church, unless it be "esoterically" interpreted, and unless Gnostic documents be used whose historical value, if judged by any save

*Rome*, p. 11; xvi., *Mithraism*, pp. 16-19; and article "Paganism" in the *Cath. Encyclopædia*) imparted, not special *doctrines*, but magical formulæ to their initiates, and an emotional *impression* that the adept was elect, blessed for this life and the next. They exacted an oath of secrecy from initiates.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The New Testament*, C.T.S., 1913 (6d.), pp. 34, 35, 42-44, 51-53.

"occultist" criteria, is nil, knows nothing of an esoteric lore.

Pliny, *c.* 112 A.D., tortured Christians to find out their religion. There were many apostates, but none had secrets to reveal (Pliny, *Ep.*, x. 97), while converts from paganism revealed their secrets readily. Clement and Tertullian, who relate them, ridicule and loathe them. Clement adopts the phraseology of the mysteries (so even Paul, Rom. xi. 25, 1 Cor. ii. 7, etc.), but puts the Christian's initiation in heaven. Tertullian notes that Paul celebrates the Eucharist among pagans on board ship! Justin relates the whole Christian cult and creed, addressing "the Emperor, his sons, the senate, the whole people." Irenæus shows that had the Apostles preached a secret lore—as heretics (*e.g.* the Gnostics), to defend their own practice, said they had—the Bishops (depositaries of the "tradition") would have known it: but they wholly ignore it. When the Church developed and conversions became frequent, profitable, or fashionable, careful and gradual instruction was, of course, insisted on: the catechumenate became more organized. In *public preaching*, especially before *mixed audiences*, reverence suggested reticence: and this (curiously) be-



comes quite common from *c.* 350 onwards, a sentiment, almost an affectation (*never a law*), leading preachers not to mention what everyone quite well knew, *e.g.* (Chrysostom) the Lord's Prayer; (Sozomen) the Nicene Creed! Basil is (probably) the only Father who suggests that this practice (with that which at this time is liturgically regular—the exclusion of catechumens and unbelievers from the canon of the Mass) was a tradition imposed by Christ or the Apostles. Not till 19th March 416 does a papal letter of Innocent I. display a pompous mystery in speaking of liturgical details which every sacramentary was about to publish to anyone still ignorant of them. The so-called *disciplina arcani* (a term invented in 1750 by the Protestant Daillé), a secret code of doctrine and rite, supposed to include the “forms” of consecration, the number of the Sacraments, the dogma of the Trinity, etc., was really invented for purposes of controversy by theologians who thought they found gaps in the early traditions, and had no notion of any “development” in the Church's thought and language. Details, it was argued, were kept secret—an esoteric lore, in fact. As unscientific was the theory of early Protestants (*e.g.* Casaubon) that the Pagan

mysteries evolved the sacramental system in the Church. In brief, genuine Christianity knows no opposition of exoteric *v.* esoteric creed or cult; only the travesties of ancient heresy or modern pseudo-history have imagined it.<sup>1</sup> We repeat, that if we use ordinary scientific canons of judgement, and not "occultist" methods, we must decide that Theosophist history is as trashy in its matter as it is habitually vulgar in its literary style.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mgr. Batiffol, "Arcane," *Dict. Théol. Cath.*; and Leclercq, *Dict. Archéol. Chrét.*; Huyskens, *Zur Frage über sogenannte Arkandisziplin*, 1891.

## IV

### CONCLUSION

I HAVE sometimes been reproached for "taking Theosophy seriously." I frankly confess I take it quite seriously. It is a form of religious belief and practice, and I cannot conceive myself taking any such form, however unprepossessing or remote, otherwise than seriously. What means to deal with God cannot be trivial.

Moreover, Theosophy consists of its ultimate doctrines, and of their popular presentment. Its elaborate historical, philosophical, and "occultist" *mise en scène* is probably what attracts the very great majority of its adherents, and this is serious. All this "abracadabra" appeals enormously to the appetite for the unusual, mysterious, and flatteringly esoteric, which is a more or less respectable, but very constant, human characteristic. Besides, this variegated literature puts the Western reader into easy contact with all that is most charm-

ing in distant and romantic traditions: the exquisite myths of Egypt and of India; the by-paths of Greek speculation; and all the fascinating grotesqueries of the Middle Ages. Even geology, chemistry, and arithmetic it invests with a fantastic and alluring aureole. Some of the elements thus made common property are historically verifiable and scientifically admissible by those who use ordinary criteria: for the condemnation of the remainder (and it preponderates), it is true they could find no language strong enough; but they will be reminded that they have but the Western consciousness, which is gross and keeps its higher faculties unexercised and dormant, and that they reject the paramount teaching authority of the Masters. The whole of this side of Theosophy is therefore withdrawn from criticism, and we shall not criticize it. Still less shall we caricature it: nothing were easier than to caricature Christianity itself; and we are ourselves, too often, but the caricature of Christians. And there are those to whom the vehicle of Theosophy means much and is dear. Hence it is, to me, quite serious.

As for the ultimate doctrines of Theosophy, for good or ill they are of the very highest

importance and seriousness. It emphasizes some of the most far-reaching truths revealed in, or governing, Godward-bound humanity, and witnesses to some of its profoundest instincts and highest aspirations.

Thus, in a materialistic age, it has the tremendous virtue of perceiving, below the surface and the letter, a spiritual reality to which it spares no pains to penetrate. No *asceticism* or discipline of body and thought, affection and will, is considered too heavy a price to pay for even a particle of diviner knowledge and of spiritual existence. It upholds, as examples, the figures of some whom it deems to have reached, in varying degrees, this goal. It has much to say of their bliss and of their new mode of life, which is richer, as in happiness, so in power and essential value. In this self-discipline the value of the "interior life" and the character-forming power of thought are emphasized; the essential brotherhood of man, based on the divine origin and lofty destiny of the soul, is affirmed; the omnipresence of the Ultimate is reiterated. All this, honestly believed and practised, will appear, to the Catholic, an admirable substratum for his own yet loftier and indescribably firmer doc-

trines of God, of the soul, of the supernatural life already entered on by the believer, of the royal way of the Cross whereby he may proceed to the full development of that life which the consciousness of his eternal and substantial union with God shall, hereafter, bring about. The Catholic will, moreover, find himself free from all the confusing consequences of a doctrine which must find room for a God evolving into Nature, a universe in process of reabsorption into God, and a rigorously determinist law of Karma. To him the Theosophist philosophy keeps him stretched upon a mental rack; Theosophist theology "depersonalizes" God without rendering Him more sublime, and drags Him down to matter without making Him more lovable: it exalts man's self to the divine, in spite of all his conscience tells him of his essential dependence and his sin; it preaches a spiritual series of necessary cause and effect which makes the good and evil in him alike no concern of his, since it was not he who started the upward or downward series, however many be the intervening births.

He admires and is grateful for, in our days of low judgements and appraisements of human history, the determination to detect God's spirit

acting everywhere; to hear the divine call in the stammered words of the humblest of the prophets; to admire the beauties even of the least fair of the world's faiths. But he finds himself in possession of a philosophy and a tradition which bids him do this, and enables him to do it, without appealing to the data of modes of consciousness altogether out of the scope of the ordinary man. History, patiently considered, will reveal to him the Christ, historical and mystical alike, as the goal of all religious conation through the centuries. *Christus cogitabatur*.<sup>1</sup> And where, to him, the Theosophist presentment of Jesus of Nazareth seems at once tragic and absurd, the divine call to which he is accustomed is still legitimately potent and unique.<sup>2</sup> Finally, in the leaders of this movement we see splendid energies, outstanding talents, warmth of sympathy passionate in its tenderness as in its indignations, and at times a genuine touch of mystical thought and expression. Yet we must say of them too what Réville says of those third-century reformers with whom they are so

<sup>1</sup> *L.H.R., Cults and Christianity*, xxxviii., c. vi. pp. 66-69.

<sup>2</sup> *C.T.S., New Testament*, p. 33.

glad to be linked: "Why must it be that at the very moment they seem about to carry us to the sublimities of the ideal religion—they fail us?" Like their "Master," Orpheus, *victus animi*, they look back, and the vision fades and the voice stammers; perforce we turn—to whom else should we go?—to Him who has the words of eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Our attention is called, as we go to press, to Mrs. Despard's *Theosophy and the Woman's Movement* (T.P.S., 6d., 1913). It appears to add nothing new, in the way of facts, to our knowledge of either of these phenomena: its argument appears to be that, the author being committed to a certain political and social ideal and method and her reading of Christianity causing that faith to appear to her out of harmony with these, Christianity must go by the board.]



## . V

### APPENDIX

#### NEO-PLATONISM AND GNOSTICISM

PAGANISM, dying, tried to fuse its religions and philosophies, to allegorize its myths, to find in one richly symbolized Pantheism consolation for its religious cravings, and salvation from the superstition or scepticism threatening it. Into this current even the Jews were swept, where (as at Alexandria) they were Hellenized. Philo (c. 40 A.D.) saw in Greek philosophy (especially Stoicism) only a loan from Moses; while the O.T., especially the Pentateuch, he allegorized to find in it all the treasures of Greek speculation. God, Philo held, was too transcendent to reveal Himself to intellect or sense, or even to create. Intermediate Powers, accordingly, create our low world; and the "second god"—God "manifest"—the *Logos* or Reason or "Word," expressed in the Universe, is our way of knowing God. Yet asceticism can so free the soul from matter that it can soar by ecstasy to contemplating the Divine Nature in itself (*cf. L.H.R.*, xii. p. 11 : xviii. p. 20, n. 3 : xx. p. 8 *sqq.*).

On its side Paganism welcomed the mysterious Hebrew religion, thus reinterpreted in its favour.

The mystic cults of Orpheus, of Pythagoras (with their Eastern theories of abstinence and transmigration), Persian dualism and Egyptian Osiric or Greek Hermetic myth, the highly Platonized Stoicism of the age, poured into the field prepared by the Alexandrians. Hence emerged the "New Platonism," taking its stand no more upon reasoning or sense-experience, but on ancient Authority and immediate Intuition. Plutarch, Cleanthes, Epictetus, even Apollonius, are among its heralds; the great Gnostics also. But its true founder was Ammonius Sakkas, d. about 245 A.D. Origen, Longinus, Plotinus will be his disciples; Plotinus the most famous. In his system, God the Invisible first generates Mind (*nous*); Mind, the soul; the Soul, this world of phenomena (here is almost our modern subjective idealism). Evil is not yet; only progressive diminution of *reality*. But, once plunged in matter, the soul is in conflict and disintegrates. Practice of virtues, asceticism, lift the life to *Mind*; ecstasy, to God. Porphyry says that Plotinus, in the six years he knew him, had four ecstasies. Porphyry was rigidly virtuous and ascetic, and violently anti-Christian. The Greek, especially Orphic, statements of religion (*L.H.R.*, xii. p. 3), must, he insisted, be maintained. With Iamblichus (d. 330 A.D.) the "theologizing" of Neo-Platonism was complete. His *de Mysteriis* reaches an incredible altitude of ascetic, altruistic, and spiritual conception; yet (tragic, but customary, paradox!) precisely from this time Neo-Platonism descends to the most grotesque of magical charlatanism, and the most futile of pseudo-mathe-

matical fantasies. The fifth-century university of Athens strove to purify, but merely rationalized and desiccated it. Its best passed over to "Dionysius," to Augustine, and Boetius (*cf.* Aug., *Conf.*, vii. 9-21). In Christian mysticism alone has the psychic balance been maintained. In the *nihilist* systems, where sense and intellect are held valueless, where abstinence is the supreme method, equilibrium was swiftly lost; licence and madness wait upon pagan asceticism and ecstasy. *Cf.* especially Zeller, *D. Philosophie d. Griechen*, 1881, iii. pp. 414-865.

The Hebrew religion, though so exclusive, modified surrounding cults (*e.g.* of Sabazius, *L.H.R.*, xiv. p. 13), and was here and there modified by them (*e.g.* at Samaria; the Essenes). Christianity, itself remaining pure, created, outside itself, extraordinary new forms, especially in Judeo-pagan areas. Even within the Church, the Judaizers provoked unhealthy speculation as to the office and hierarchy of the angels, the nature of God, His relation to the law, the Messiah. Speculation runs riot: a special *gnôsis* or esoteric knowledge claims to sound the "deep things" (*of Satan*, cries the Apocalypse, ii. 6, 14); tends to thrust God aloof; to subordinate the Christ; to "genealogize" intermediate spiritual beings; to preach a perverse asceticism (1, 2 Thess.; 1 Cor. iii. 11-16; 1, 2 Tim.; the "circular letter" called Ephesians; especially Col. i. 15-10, ii.; Jude; 2 Peter. It is from Paul the Gnostics will take the words *plêrôma*, *æon*; as from John, the *Logos*, *Life*: not *vice versâ*).

Contemporary with John, Cerinthus declares God so aloof that He cannot "touch" matter. Thus *on* the

man Jesus, born of Joseph and Mary, the Christ, or Spirit, descends only at the Baptism; the *creator-god*, Yahweh, cannot be God, but is an angel. Quiet follows for a space. But under Pope Callixtus (217-222), a Syrian, Alcibiades, appears at Rome, with a mystic book given, in 100 A.D., to a holy man named Elkasai by an angel 30 leagues tall, called the *Son of God*, coupled with a like female figure, the *Spirit of God*. They preach penance and repeated baptisms, in which the initiates invoke seven witnesses, Heaven, Earth, Holy Spirits, Angels of Prayer, Oil, Salt, Earth. Syrian formulæ occur, to be recited backwards. East of the Jordan and Dead Sea, even about 400 A.D., sects of these (Osseans, Sampseans, etc.) remain. They observe Jewish rites, retain fragmentary gospels, reject Paul, practise asceticism, and usually say that on to Jesus, son of Joseph, an Æon, or Spirit, or Angel (earlier incarnate in Adam, etc.) descended at the Baptism.

But genuine Gnosticism had truer forerunners in the Syrian systems which may be connected with Simon Magus.<sup>1</sup> His system centred in Samaria, a tainted centre of Jewish reverie. Simon taught a Supreme Power, which was himself, and its First Conception, Wisdom (revealed in his companion Helen). Through her, he conceives, and thereby creates, the Angels. They, jealous of her, prevent her return to his mind, whence she had leapt. He therefore descends to redeem her (appearing, in suitable form, in each of the Angelic Worlds as he

<sup>1</sup> See Acts viii. 5, 14. Justin, *Apol.*, i. 26, 56. Eus., *H.E.*, ii. 13, 14. Irenæus, *a. Hær.*, i. 16.

passes through it) into this angel-created world. In Samaria he appears (in Simon) as Father, in Judea as the Son (in whom he seems to die), in the Gentiles as the Spirit. He liberates the Divinity half lost in humanity, and mankind (by the knowledge of himself) he emancipates, *e.g.* from the Mosaic Law. In this "pre-Christian Gnosticism," Phœnician, Hellenistic, and Judaic notions fused.

A mushroom growth of heresies followed. Saturninus of Antioch (under Trajan, 98-119) is the first outstanding figure. For him too God is infinitely remote. Seven angels make the world and men, in some of whom is a spark, issued from God, and to return to Him at death. Yahweh is such an angel, in revolt against God. Jesus, an emanation from God, has no human birth or body, but comes to defeat Yahweh and save such men as have the spark. Marriage and procreation are works of Satan. Yet Saturninus is no "Christ," nor are "couples" (Simon-Helen) indicated. In similar sects (which do not persist: Origen, *c.* 240, says but thirty "Simonians" survive in the whole world!) we always find an Ineffable God, coupled with a Supreme Thought; hence Æons in groups of seven and eight emanate. Always, too, some Æon suffers misfortune, whence sparks of fire fall into the lower world. Often a Demiurge believes himself God, and inspires the Old Testament. The Æon "Christ," one of the highest in the Plêrôma (*scil.* the totality of the Æons), joins himself to the man Jesus and they begin redemption.

But under Hadrian (117-138) the great Gnostics appear, gravitating (inevitably) to Rome, but hailing

(Valentinus, Basilides, Carpocrates) from Alexandria. Common features reveal themselves. The true God is unreachable, incommunicable. Yahweh, Creator and Lawgiver, is therefore no true God ; but, like the world, is but one in a series of divinely originated but degenerating beings, often involved in some mysterious catastrophe. Jesus comes to reveal God, and to deliver such elements in world or man as are capable of redemption. But since God cannot really unite with man, the Incarnation is illusory and transitory. The Passion and Resurrection are unreal ; *our* body will not rise. Hence either the flesh, to free the soul, must be annihilated (whence savage asceticism) ; or the soul, artificially linked to flesh, is irresponsible for the body's vagaries (whence licence). Hence invariable rejection of the Old Testament, and prolific creation of "esoteric" gospels —of Thomas, Philip, Jude ; the Greater and Lesser Questions of Mary ; the Gospel of Perfection : hence "apocrypha" placed in the mouths of ancient sages —Enoch, Seth, Elias ; hence new inspired prophets (Bar-kabbas, Bar-koph) ; and mythical "interpreters" of the Apostles ("Glaucias," of Peter for the Basilidians : "Theodas," of Paul for the Valentinians). Much external ceremonial and magic formula were used.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to detail this grotesque system. Men are material (who cannot be saved), psychic (who may be), spiritual (who must be : these

<sup>1</sup> Valentinus' system is "nuptial" : the (male) Abyss marries Silence ; hence Mind and Truth, who also marry (these are the first Tetrad of Higher Æons) ; hence Word and Life, whence Man and Church, whence many further pairs of intermarrying Æons, forming the Plêrôma.

are the Valentinians—they simply have to let themselves live; their spirit is independent of their body). Basilides' system was "celibate," and nearer Saturninus' than Simon's. The Unbegotten begot Mind, whence the Word, whence Knowledge, whence Wisdom and Might, whence Virtues, Powers, and Angels. Our heaven (the 365th) is populated by angels, chief of whom is Yahweh. He tries to tyrannize; strife breaks out; God sends Mind (as Jesus) to make peace. The Cyrenean dies in his place, whence no honour is due to the Crucified. The Old Testament is rejected, but ordinary morality is retained. Passions are "appendices," and cannot hurt the soul in the long run, though forcing it to expiate sins in future lives (by metempsychosis). Magic, especially the word *Abrahas*, conquers bad angels. Carpocrates was far more Hellenized and need not be discussed. He was a Platonist tinged with Gnostic Christianity.

In these systems the progressive degeneration of Light into Darkness, the irreducible opposition of Good to Bad, shows as certain a modification of Syrian thought by Persian dualism, as of Alexandrian by Platonic Pantheism. Alexandria can thus be more tolerant than Syria, and connect Christ with the Creator, with whom Syria can but contrast Him. In the symbolism of the Gnostics the serpent played a prominent part. For all this, *cf.* especially Mgr. Duchesne, *History of the Early Church*, i. c. 11; Mansel, *Gnostic Heresies*, 1875; C. W. King, *Gnostics and their Remains*, 1887; Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, 1894.

# INDEX

- Alcohol, 94.  
 Alexandrian Judaism, 133.  
 Altruism, 95; *cf.* Devachan,  
     Renunciation, Mahâtmas.  
 Ammonius Sakkas, 40, 134.  
 Angels and angelic hierar-  
     chies, in Theosophy, 65 n.,  
     91; in Gnostic systems,  
     135 *sq.*  
 Apollonius of Tyana, 44, 111.  
 Arcane, discipline of, 122-126;  
     *cf.* Esotericism.  
 Asceticism, in Theosophy, 94;  
     in pagan and Gnostic  
     systems, 134-139; Chris-  
     tian, 97-99.  
 Astral plane, 78-80.  
 Astral stuff and corpse, 79.  
 Astrology, 103 n.  
 Atlantis, 74.  
 Atonement, 87; Mrs. Besant's  
     esoteric doctrine of, 92.  
 Aura and auric egg, 79, 83.  
 Basilides, 138.  
 Besant, Mrs., 22-31; and  
     *passim.*  
 Bible, the, and criticism, 118.  
 Blavatsky, Mme., 13-22; and  
     *passim.*  
 Böhme, 43.  
 Bradlaugh, 27 *sq.*  
 Brahma, 64.  
 Breathing, 95 n.  
 Buddhas of Compassion, *cf.*  
     Renunciation.  
 Buddhism, *passim*, and especi-  
     ally contrasted with Theo-  
     sophy, 101; with Christi-  
     anity, 90, 111.  
 Catholic doctrine of the  
     Church and dogma, 37;  
     mysticism, 41; tradition and  
     faith, 54, 55; supernatural  
     sanctity, grace, and the  
     beatific vision, 54; the  
     nature of God, man's ana-  
     logical knowledge of Him,  
     57-61; pantheism, evolu-  
     tion, and creation, 67-69;  
     free-will, 88-90; ethic, as-  
     ceticism, altruism, and re-  
     demption, 96-99; miracles,  
     110; esotericism, 122-126;  
     a Catholic view of Theo-  
     sophy, 127-132.  
 Cerinthus, 135.  
 Christ, according to Theo-  
     sophy, 112; the mystical,  
     mythical, and historical  
     Christ, 116-118.



- Christianity, rejected by Mrs. Besant, 25; contrasted with Theosophy, 111; esoterically interpreted, 113-121; *cf.* Catholic doctrine.
- Clairvoyance and clairaudience, 15, 55, 74, 78, 110, 120.
- Clement of Alexandria, 51, 124.
- Cornelius Agrippa, 43.
- Coulomb, Mme., 16, 17, 106 *sq.*
- Creeds, their esoteric meaning, 118-121.
- Despard, Mrs., 132.
- Devachan, 77-82; and *cf.* Renunciation.
- Esotericism, 122-126.
- Ethic, Theosophist, 93-96; *cf.* Altruism.
- Faith, 47-49, 54.
- Fatalism, *cf.* Karma.
- Free-will, 88-90; *cf.* Karma.
- Ghosts, 79, 83; *cf.* Astral body.
- Gnosticism, 100, 135-139.
- God, Theosophical doctrine of, 56; Catholic doctrine of, 57-61.
- Golden Chain, The, 92 n.
- Heaven, devachanic, 80.
- Hell, 82.
- Hodgson, Mr., 18, 107, 111.
- Hull, Father, 59, 67, 84, 85, 98.
- Iamblichus, 134.
- Irenæus, St., 124.
- Jesuits, The, 115, 116.
- Judaism, 133, 135; *cf.* Kabbalah.
- Judge, Mr. W. Q., 34, 35.
- Justin, St., 111.
- Kabbalah, 43.
- Karma, 86-93.
- Lemuria, 73.
- Levi, Eliphaz, 44.
- Logos, in Theosophy, 65, 112; in Gnostic systems, 135.
- Magic, 41; *cf.* Miracles, Spiritualism, Mysticism.
- Mahâtmas, 17 *sq.*, 30, 35, 46, 47, 49-53, 73, 108.
- Man, his sevenfold nature, 76.
- Manvantara and Pralaya, 62, 64.
- Marriage, 94.
- Masons, 43.
- Miracles, 104-109, and *passim*; Catholic doctrine of, 110.
- Mysteries, pagan, 122 n. 2; "Guild of the Mysteries of God," 121.
- Mysticism, 40-43.
- Neo-Platonism, 44, 134.
- Nirvâna, 69, 82, 96.
- Olcott, Col., 16, 17, 104, etc.
- Oltramare, Prof., 45.
- Pantheism, 62; *cf.* Catholic doctrine of God.
- Papus (Dr. Encausse), 44.
- Paracelsus, 43.

- Paradise, *cf.* Devachan.  
 Paul, St., 51, 114.  
 Philo, 44, 133.  
 Pico della Mirandola, 43.  
 Pliny, 124.  
 Plotinus, 134.  
 Pralaya, *cf.* Manvantara.  
 Prayer, 87, 90-91.  
  
 Reincarnation, 77, 84-86, 88.  
 Renunciation, 50, 82, 95.  
 Retribution, *cf.* Karma.  
 Rosicrucians, 43.  
  
 Sabazius, 135.  
 Saturninus, 137.  
 Simon Magus, 136.  
 Sinnett, A. P., 17, 30, 106, etc.  
 Society for Psychical Research,  
     18, 53, 103, 106.  
 Spirit and matter, 70.  
 Spiritualism, 17, 30; and  
     Theosophy, 102, 103, 105.  
 Star in the East, Guild of  
     the, 122.  
 Swedenborg, 43.  
  
 Templars, 43.  
 Theosophical Society, its found-  
     ation and constitution,  
     32-39.  
 Theosophy, its name and his-  
     tory, 40-46; its character,  
     47-49; adaptability to Bud-  
     dhism, Brahminism, Chris-  
     tianity, 101 n., 62, 65, 92,  
     112 sq.  
 Tingley, Mrs., 33.  
 Tradition, 54, 122-126.  
 Trinity, Theosophist, 64; eso-  
     teric interpretation of the  
     Christian Trinity, 65.  
  
 Universe, The, its origin and  
     construction, 61-76.  
  
 Vâhan, The, 39.  
 Valentinus, 138.  
 Vegetarianism, 94.  
  
 White Lotus Day, 18.  
  
 Yoga discipline, 94, n.

---

The following will be found useful for reference:—*Theosophy and Christianity*, E. R. Hull, editor of the *Bombay Examiner*, C.T.S. *Cf.*, too, L. de Grandmaison, *Le Lotus Bleu*, Paris, Bloud, series *Science et Religion*, No. 364; O. Zimmermann, *Die neue Theosophie in Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, 1910, x. pp. 387-400, 479-495; R. F. Clarke, "What is Theosophy?" in *The Month*, Jan. 1892, p. 1; "The Marvels of Theosophy," *ibid.*, Feb., p. 173; "The True Character of Theosophy," *ibid.*, March, p. 321; G. Busnelli, *Manuale di Teosofia*, i., Rome, 1910.

Price ONE SHILLING net.

# FACTS & THEORIES

*Being a Consideration of some Biological  
Conceptions of To-Day*

BY

Sir BERTRAM WINDLE, M.D., Sc.D., LL.D., F.R.S., etc.

PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CORK.

## CONTENTS.

On "Bias"—On "Dogma" and "Dogmatism"—On "Nature" and "Science," and on "Facts," "Laws," and "Hypotheses"—On Life and the Explanations offered thereon—On the Origination of Life: Biogenesis and Abiogenesis—On the Variability of Living Things, and on "Darwinism"—What Darwin himself held—The Origin of Man—"Darwinism" and certain Superstructures: Morality and Morals—Some other "Isms."

## SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

*The Month* :—"While of course a detailed discussion of any one subject is not possible, yet the author never gives the impression of being superficial. He is very simple and at the same time very convincing. . . . This book should be placed in every convent-, school-, parish-, and private-library; it should be in every case of the C.T.S., on every barrow of the C.R.G.; it should be given as prizes, and quoted from the pulpit, and thumbed in lecture-rooms and study-clubs. For it diffuses the clear, steady light of reason, reason sure of its grounds but conscious of its limitations, throughout a world obscured by the mists of rationalism."

*The Irish Catholic* :—"An eminently instructive book. . . . The more wide circulation the volume obtains, the better in this period of 'popular literature' and 'popular science.'"

*The Examiner* (Bombay) :—"Most interesting and instructive from end to end, and easy reading besides. It is just one of those 'Fortifying the Layman' books which are a desideratum of the day, and which, when an author takes the trouble of writing them, ought to be widely read."

*The Catholic Times* :—"We very heartily recommend to all our readers who are interested in the questions of biology and the origin of life on earth this excellent book."

---

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY,

69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.E.

[OVER

# **PAMPHLETS FOR INQUIRERS**

## **ONE PENNY EACH.**

**The Spirit World.** By the Bishop of Salford.

**Spiritualism.** By the Very Rev. Mgr. Benson.

**"Christian Science."** By the same.

**What about Hypnotism?** By the Rev. H. G. Hughes.

**Science and Faith.** By the Rev. F. Aveling, D.D., Ph.D.

**Miracle.** By C. Kegan Paul, M.A.

**Catholicism and the Future.** By Monsignor Benson.

**Thoughts for Freethinkers.** By the Very Rev. Canon Barry.

**The Prospects of Catholicism.** By the same.

**Positivism.** By the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J.

**Faith and Reason.** By the Rev. Bernard Vaughan, S.J.

**The Analogy between the Mysteries of Nature and of Grace.** By Cardinal Newman.

**Science and its Counterfeit.** By the Rev. J. Gerard, S.J., F.L.S.

**Agnosticism.** By the same.

**Modern Freethought.** By the same.

**Modern Science and Ancient Faith.**

**Indifferentism.** By the Rev. Charles Coupe, S.J.

**Pantheism.** By William Matthews.

**The Intellectual Claims of the Catholic Church.** By  
Sir Bertram Windle, F.R.S.

**Reason and Instinct.** By the Rev. P. M. Northcote.

**The Powers and Origin of the Soul.** By the same.

**The Use of Reason.** By the same.

**Confessions of an Unwilling Sceptic.** By W. Matthews.

**The Virgin Birth and the Gospel of the Infancy.** By  
the Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J.

**Anti-Christian Literature.** By the same.


---

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY,  
69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.E.









33164

